

STARS AND STRIPES®

**Berry accepts
Razzie as
worst actress**

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Actress
Halle Berry

**Afghanistan's
new army now
tops 20,000**

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Pope John Paul II

**Pope quietly
appears at
hospital window**

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Volume 63, No. 315 © SS 2005 G

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2005

50¢

Syrian forces capture Saddam's half brother

Al-Hassan suspected of financing Iraq insurgents fighting U.S. Page 6



Skiing down the road to health

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Marine Cpl. Casey Owens, of Houston, cruises down the slope Friday during a sit-ski lesson on Vail Mountain in Vail, Colo. Owens lost both of his legs in a land mine incident in Iraq in September 2004. The second annual Vail Veterans Ski Weekend provided the opportunity for 18 U.S. servicemembers who are recent amputees to spend two days on the slopes learning to ski and snowboard through Vail's Adaptive Ski Program.

AP



RAYMOND T. CONWAY/Stars and Stripes

Hanau boys defend Division II title by rallying past outsized Aviano

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On Thursday

Exotic Tangier stirs
many emotions

Steven Tyler

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Schwarzenegger's political future: California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger may have joked about becoming president, but he said in an interview broadcast Sunday that he's never seriously considered it.

The Austrian-born Schwarzenegger said he is not the reason behind talk of amending the Constitution so immigrants can occupy the White House.

"I don't think the idea is that all the push is because of me. I mean, I have never thought about running for president, and this is not my vision," Schwarzenegger said on "This Week with George Stephanopoulos."

World

Syria withdrawal from Lebanon: A visiting senior U.S. State Department official on Sunday brushed off accusations that Washington's calls for Syria to leave Lebanon as soon as possible amounted to interference in Lebanese internal affairs.

David Satterfield, a U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state, was scheduled to meet Foreign Minister Mahmoud Hammoud on Monday to convey the U.S. demand for a full and immediate withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon and the need for a thorough inquiry into the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

In Egypt, visiting Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa said his country was fully committed to implementing the 1989 Taif agreement. But he continued to reject a September U.N. Security Council resolution that demands Syria pull all its 15,000 forces from its neighbor, and suggested even Lebanon did not want a full withdrawal.

Bird flu epidemic: Vietnamese officials confirmed on Sunday that a 69-year-old man has died from bird flu, the 14th person to die from the disease this year.

The man, from northern Thai Binh province, was admitted to the provincial hospital on Feb. 19 with classic bird flu symptoms, said Phan Van Diu, director of Thai Binh Provincial Preventive Medicine Center.

Samples taken from the man, who died on Wednesday, tested positive for the H5N1 virus, Diu said.

Since Dec. 30, 13 people from Vietnam have died from the bird flu. A total of 46 people from Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia have perished from the bird flu over the past year.

Rebels, military clash in Indonesia: Suspected rebels killed an Indonesian soldier and wounded another in the first clash since both sides concluded a second round of peace talks aimed at ending a three-decade insurrection in tsunami-hit Aceh province, the military said Sunday.

The fighting late Saturday occurred in Krueang Raya district, just east of the provincial capital of Banda Aceh, on Sumatra island's northern tip, military spokesman Lt. Col. Ediana Sulistiadi said.

"The rebels took advantage of Indonesian troops taking part in humanitarian operations," said Sulistiadi. He could not provide further details. There was no immediate reaction from the rebels.



WTC memorial: A fragment of the original granite fountain 1993 World Trade Center bombing memorial rests in a case as friends and family of the victims of the bombing gather for a memorial service Saturday at St. Peter's Church in New York on the 12th anniversary of the terrorist attack. The granite fountain memorial was destroyed during the Sept. 11, 2001, World Trade Center attack. The fragment, which was found during the rescue and recovery operation, was installed Saturday as the central piece to a new memorial.

Swiss army leaves Indonesia: The Swiss army flew its final relief missions in Indonesia's tsunami-battered Aceh province on Sunday as its soldiers prepared to leave the region, becoming the latest foreign military to withdraw and hand over its work to civilian agencies.

Three Swiss army choppers have been dropping off tents, blankets and medicines to survivors on Aceh's west coast since they arrived in the province six weeks ago.

Fifty Swiss soldiers deployed to the region were set to leave Sunday, according to a statement from the Swiss Embassy.

Indonesia wants foreign troops to leave Aceh by March 26, when it said it would be able to handle the relief efforts.

Anglican church dispute: Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams suggested Sunday that the North American churches that have elected a gay bishop and blessed same-sex relationships might have to back down if the worldwide Anglican communion is to hold together.

The election of a gay bishop in the United States and the blessing of same-sex unions there and in Canada has opened a rift between Anglican liberals — many of them in North America — and conservatives, who are strongest in Africa and Asia.

Anglican leaders meeting near Belfast asked the U.S. Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada to withdraw from the Anglican Consultative Council for three years — a move some fear could be the first step toward a permanent split.

Prince Charles to visit Sri Lanka: Britain's Prince Charles was set to stop briefly in Sri Lanka on Monday to visit areas of this former British colony devastated by the Dec. 26 tsunami.

The prince was also scheduled to meet

with President Chandrika Kumaratunga and British diplomatic staff before leaving later the same day for a tour of Australia, New Zealand and Fiji.

Sri Lanka was one of the countries hit hardest by the Asian tsunami, with more than 31,000 dead and thousands more missing.

WTO protest planned: About 5,000 activists are planning to stage a protest ahead of the World Trade Organization meeting to be held in December in Hong Kong, organizers said Sunday.

About 250 activists from around the world agreed at a two-day meeting that ended here Sunday to hold a protest Dec. 10, said Apo Leong, a meeting organizer. The WTO meeting is scheduled for Dec. 13-18.

The Hong Kong WTO meeting is aimed at reducing tariffs and subsidies, and forging a trade treaty that would take effect in 2005 or early 2007.

Royal wedding tension: Prince Charles complained bitterly in a 1998 interview that the British people had "tortured" him over his relationship with Camilla Parker Bowles, said an excerpt published Sunday from a forthcoming book by a BBC journalist.

"I thought the British people were supposed to be compassionate," Charles said, according to the excerpt printed in The Mail on Sunday newspaper. "I don't see much of it."

Charles and Parker Bowles are to marry April 8. While initial public reaction to the announcement of their wedding was subdued, a series of gaffes in the planning of the event have received mercilessly mocking press coverage.

Stories and photo from The Associated Press

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'Idol' wannabes make sweet music at Aviano

Female airman wins, will sing at USAFE-wide contest in April

BY KENT HARRIS
Stars and Stripes

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — Rhonda Smiley might not be the idol of millions — at least not yet. But the senior airman from the 603rd Air Control Squadron impressed a few hundred people Saturday night. Smiley won the "Aviano Idol" contest, earning a trip to Germany in April to take on the best from the rest of the U.S. Air Forces in Europe.

"I thought I had a shot, but I didn't think I was going to win it," the 23-year-old said.

She sang Alicia Keyes' "Diary" and got a first-place vote from all three judges. Unlike "American Idol," the judges didn't air their critiques of each performer. There were television cameras, but there apparently wasn't anyone watching to see an ear-splitting performance.

"Considering that this is a small base, if you're not very good, you probably don't want to go up there," said audience member LeToya Jones-Sanders.

Seemingly everyone in the audience was there to support a friend.

"He's going to win," Neia Morton said of her friend, Staff Sgt. Yakemon Jones, before the show.

Several rows away in the base's community center, Michaela Martin, had a different opinion. She was there for Senior Airman Kristi Barber: "She's the best."

Smiley turned out to be the winner, though. Airman 1st Class



PHOTOS BY KENT HARRIS/Stars and Stripes

Above: Every contestant had their fans at the "Aviano Idol" contest Saturday night at the base's community center. Kyla Sildham, 4½, shows off support for her daddy, Staff Sgt. Christopher Sildham. **Right:** Airman Rhonda Smiley, who has been singing since age 6, will get a chance to show off her vocal chords at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, in April, after winning Saturday's contest.

Elizabeth Liddy from the 31st Maintenance Squadron was second and Capt. Summer Davis from the 31st Mission Support Group was third.

Backed by Touch 'n Go, a USAFE band, 11 performers took to the stage in the second in a series of "Idols" at USAFE.

There were four competitors recently at Lajes Field in the Azores. Three stops in England, two in Germany and one in Tur-

key are still ahead. The top performers from all the bases will meet April 23 at Ramstein Air Base to determine the command's top vocalist.

Smiley, born in Brunswick, Ga., grew up singing in various choirs.

"This was my first time singing with a band," she said. "It was very good."

Her father was in the Air Force, and she's been in for six years. But she said singing "has always been a dream of mine."

Jeffrey Davis, assistant director for the community center and one of the local organizers, said there weren't any William Hungs that wanted to take the stage. Hung is infamous for his off-key



Liddy



audition on "American Idol" that he somehow turned into a record deal.

"We could have done one of those as well, but we didn't think that was appropriate," Davis said. "Plus there would have to be someone here that would actually do that."

Instead, the laughs Saturday were supplied by host and AFN radio personality Chris Vadnais,

who appeared to have better material than "American Idol" host Ryan Seacrest. Vadnais joked that the "USAFE Idol" winner would probably appear in an AFN commercial with Gen. Robert Foglesong, the USAFE commander. "I don't think he does very many of those, so it's an honor," he said.

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Darmstadt preschool program christens new building

BY JESSICA INIGO
Stars and Stripes

DARMSTADT, Germany — With a more spacious building to romp around, some Darmstadt children are sure to get a great start in education.

Sure Start, a preschool program mainly for children of junior enlisted troops, formally dedicated a new building at the Darmstadt Elementary School grounds last week.

The event was marked with impressions of the new facility from Diana Ohman, the director of the Department of Defense Dependents Schools in Europe, and Russ Claus, school principal.

Though a false fire alarm interrupted the gala, children were soon returned to their classrooms in straight lines, and went back to singing and cheering on the new addition. After the ceremonial cake slicing, Ohman took over serving responsibilities. Parents and children mingled, discussing what a difference the new building makes in the month it has been used.

"The new place looks great. There's a lot more space and it looks more organized," said Amy Watson, the mother of Kirstyn Ouellette, 6, who attended Sure Start last year. "I was very impressed with



JAYME LOPPINHO/Special to Stars and Stripes

Children in the Sure Start program at the Darmstadt Elementary School perform a song during Thursday's grand opening of the program's new building.

the discipline taught in class. By the end of the year she knew her letters, sounds and was beginning to read before kindergarten. It gave her a great start."

After the ceremony Janine Ugalde, Sure

Start teacher, gushed about the new features available to the class.

"I love it, I love it, I love it," she said. "Having a full kitchen allows us to explore new activities with cooking and cooking re-

lated to science. We can also incorporate reading and math skills with it."

Ugalde said many parents — especially some buff moms — helped get the facility moved and running within three days.

She said the new Sure Start building has been open since the third week of January.

"We thought we were going to need more kids [for moving], but the moms really came through. I was impressed," Ugalde said.

Sure Start is the overseas DODDS equivalent to the Stateside Head Start program, according to Ugalde.

She said Sure Start provides qualifying children with a high quality, developmentally appropriate education that will prepare them for school.

Claus said there are a number of criteria looked at for students to qualify for this special DODD program. These include rank, the number of siblings in a household, and whether or not a foreign language is spoke in the house.

Ugalde suggests any junior enlisted troop apply for the program.

"A lot of kindergarten teachers have noticed an impact on children who have experienced the Sure Start program," Ugalde said.

E-mail Jessica Inigo at: inigo.j@mail.strips.osd.mil

Breaking the cycle of poverty with education

Darmstadt man founded group to educate girls in poor countries

BY JESSICA INIGO
Stars and Stripes

DARMSTADT, Germany — David Kenneth Waldman believes a better future for the world lies in the education of little girls.

When they are educated, the entire community thrives, he said.

Waldman is hoping to make this happen during his off time as a training and curriculum specialist at the Child Development Center on Lincoln Village. He'll do it through his international educational foundation, To Love Children, which he founded in 2002.

TLC is a nonprofit organization specifically devoted to working for the education of girls in developing countries.

Waldman explained that because girls generally face higher obstacles in getting educated, removing these obstacles is the best way to boost enrollment for all children. Also, since the benefits of education are passed on from one generation to the next, the future of these who will follow will be much brighter too, he said.

In late November, Waldman, 52, took a trip to the Uganda, Africa, to give homeless children in the northern region more opportunities for education.

"The teachers are the real heroes in this society and, yes, having been a teacher as I started out my career in 1976, I am biased in my reporting perhaps. But I don't think any objective person seeing the determination that the teachers have under the extreme conditions they teach in. Most are not able to eat for there is no money



David Kenneth Waldman visits the Kamuli District in Uganda, Africa, during his visit in November. The children are orphaned, and many are handicapped or suffering with AIDS/HIV. Waldman helped set up a school in the area that serves 700 children.

for food or availability to food," Waldman wrote in a report of Uganda for TLC once he returned to Germany.

Through the organization he set up a Universal African Resource Center and library in Gulu, which is the first library his organization has set up in a war zone. There are two others, another in Africa and one in India.

"The UARCL serves 200 children per day and, so being, are thousands of children reached by this project when multiplied annually," said David Lubale, the African director of Global Child Programs with TLC. He said this would not have been possible without Waldman's support.

He went on to explain that Waldman didn't just help with ed-

ucation in Uganda, but also is concerned with the people and their health.

"It's not just Africa, it's not just the United States. It's world-

"There's hope in places that seem like there could only be despair and smiles in the most unusual places. I loved it."

David Kenneth Waldman

Founder of To Love Children foundation

wide," Waldman said.

"Once you visit Uganda you never leave it," he said. "There's hope in places that seem like there could only be despair and smiles in the most unusual places. I loved it."

Through TLC, Waldman said

he is reaching his goal of getting more girls into school, ensuring they stay there and have the basic tools they need to succeed in life.

With arms gliding calmly into the air, Waldman methodically retells how he went from a kid who used to baby-sit in the Bronx to a man with a mission.

In his slightly nasally, relentlessly positive, voice, Waldman retells how when meeting a young Thai girl he was sponsoring he realized his life's work — it was like a light turned on inside him.

"In 1988 I sponsored a girl in Thailand through Plan International. In 1990 I went to visit her, walking down that dirt road in rural Thailand, near the border of Laos. When I saw her up on the

Stripes Spotlight



David Kenneth Waldman

Waldman founded To Love Children, an international foundation

devoted to the education of girls in developing countries.

Job: Works for the Child Development Center in Darmstadt, Germany.

Age: 52

Family: Single

Hometown: Bronx, N.Y.

Stars and Stripes

porch of her house with her grandmother, I knew instinctively, and consciously stopped, and turned to the translator and physically and verbally said that I need to have a moment here. That I now know this is what I'm doing for the rest of my life: create a foundation for children," Waldman said, who had already been an elementary school teacher and education publisher throughout the 80s.

Waldman got the name of his foundation from a television program he hosted and produced called "To Love Children," in which he interviewed educators and organizations for blind children in the San Francisco area.

Now, with his international foundation officially founded out of California and set up on a permanent basis in Africa, Waldman hopes the education he helps to provide will help break the cycle of poverty.

For more information, go to www.tolovechildren.org.

E-mail Jessica Inigo at: inigoj@mail.esrpress.osd.mil

Senior Navy admiral takes helm of Pacific Command

Adm. William Fallon succeeds retiring Adm. Thomas Fargo

The Associated Press

CAMP H.M. SMITH, Hawaii — Adm. William J. Fallon has assumed leadership of the U.S. Pacific Command, the nation's largest military command.

Fallon succeeded Adm. Thomas Fargo, who is retiring after 35 years in the Navy.

"I pledge to you a dedication to the task of enhancing stability and to setting conditions for a security environment in this region and throughout the world," Fallon



Fallon

Adm. William Fallon is a former vice chief of naval operations, the No. 2 Navy job at the Pentagon.

said during Saturday's ceremony attended by Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Fallon, 60, is a former vice chief of naval operations, the No. 2 Navy job at the Pentagon. He flew combat missions in the Vietnam War, commanded a carrier air wing in the Persian Gulf War of 1991, and four years later led the naval battle group supporting NATO operations in Bosnia.

He was previously the commander of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet and the Fleet Forces Command in Norfolk, Va.

In August, the White House chose Air Force Gen. Gregory S. Martin to succeed Fargo. But two months later, Martin asked that his nomination be withdrawn after pointed questioning during a Senate confirmation hearing.

The Pacific Command, based at Camp H.M. Smith overlooking Pearl Harbor, is the largest of the United States' nine unified military operations. Its commander leads 300,000 Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force troops in an area of more than 100 million square miles that includes flash points such as North Korea, Taiwan and China.



EVYLYN P. HAYWOOD/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, presents Adm. Thomas B. Fargo the Joint Meritorious Unit Award at the Pacific Command change-of-command ceremony at Camp Smith, Hawaii. Fargo was relieved by Adm. William J. Fallon.

Iraq war amputees ski way to recovery

The Associated Press

VAIL, Colo. — Eighteen soldiers who lost limbs while serving in Iraq were learning to ski and snowboard Saturday in Colorado, part of an effort to speed their recovery with lessons in winter sports.

The soldiers arrived in this mountain resort town for the weekend after coming straight

from Walter Reed Army Medical Hospital in Washington, D.C.

Among them was Marine Cpl. Christopher Fesmire, who lost both legs in Iraq when a mine exploded under his Humvee. With a smile and a cigarette between his lips, Fesmire shifted from a wheelchair to a mono-ski during his first lesson.

"A lot of people look at me now as a cripple. I resent that," said

Fesmire, 27. "I'm limited, but that doesn't mean I can't do everything I want to do. A couple years from now, I'm going to be running around playing soccer, snowboarding, maybe surfing again. You aren't going to be able to tell I lost my legs."

For many veterans, "the trip to Vail is their first adventure outside of the hospital," said Cheryl Jensen, who organized the event.

"This weekend is all about providing an inspirational experience that focuses on abilities versus disabilities."

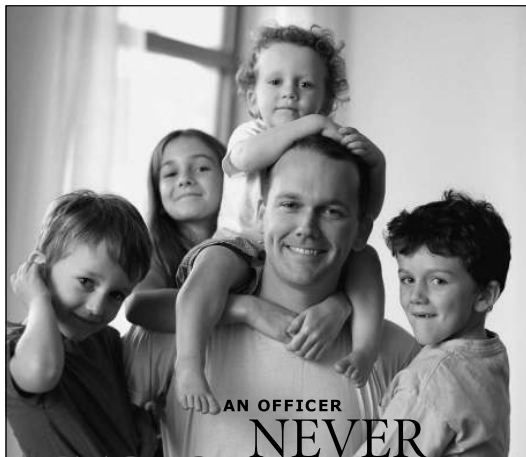
Ski instructor Sarah Will said there are ways to compensate for the loss of limbs. She should know: Will was paralyzed from the waist down in a ski accident in 1998.

"Sometimes, the double 'amps' will run into a problem where

they aren't getting enough forward pressure because they don't have their legs out in front of them," she said. In those cases, amputees can use weight bags to compensate.

Army Capt. David Rozelle attended the ski weekend last year, when it was first offered, after losing his right foot. He returned this time to help fellow soldiers.

"This gives them the confidence to overcome," Rozelle said.



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Top NCO in Guard focuses on mental health of troops

By JOE BIESK

The Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Ky. — When the Kentucky Army National Guard's top noncommissioned officer takes on a new national role this summer, he plans to keep issues affecting soldiers' well-being at the military's forefront.

Chief among them is ensuring the lasting psychological well-being of Guard and Reserve troops returning from combat, Command Sgt. Maj. John D. Gipe said in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

"There's a decompression time-frame you have to go through when you come back from being in a combat zone, and you try to get back into your civilian life," Gipe, 47, said.

Beginning in August, Gipe will serve as the top enlisted soldier for the Army National Guard. His role will be to serve as an adviser to Lt. Gen. Roger C. Schultz, the Army Guard's national commander, on soldiers' quality of life and training matters.

Unlike active-duty troops, Guard and Reserve soldiers do not always live near a military base. That sometimes makes it more difficult for them to get follow-up treatment, Gipe said.

Active duty troops "can drive right across post" for health or mental health care, Gipe said. "The guard doesn't have that capability. We've got some soldiers who may live six hours from the nearest active duty post. So I'd like to look at whatever we can do and provide some kind of health care net."

There are more than 1,600 Kentucky National Guard soldiers and airmen mobilized overseas to Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. There are 1,200 Kentucky Guard troops currently in Iraq, and one in Afghanistan.

Currently, all soldiers returning from combat zones go through a "demobilization process" that includes a mental health assessment. Like full-time active-duty troops, reservists already have counseling and other services available to them, Army spokeswoman Rhonda Paige said.

"They're not attached necessarily to an installation," Paige said.



Command Sgt. Maj. John D. Gipe, Kentucky's Army National Guard's top NCO, talks Wednesday about his roll as the top enlisted soldier for the National Guard.

"The support is there, but it's different than what is there if you're an active-duty family living on post."

Military officials are continuously looking to improve on support services already in place, she said.

Right now, troops are briefed on the symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder before leaving the combat zone. They are also given counseling on what they might expect when they return home, Paige said.

Before leaving the desert, troops take a survey that is followed up with a one-on-one interview with a health professional upon their return, Paige said.

A U.S. Department of Defense plan currently in the works would have all soldiers take a "reassessment" survey 90 to 120 days after they return from combat, Paige said.

Follow-up treatment is necessary for troops who may be dealing with "post-traumatic stress disorder," said Dr. David Fassler, a clinical associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Vermont.

"It's important to intervene early. People who experience trauma need support from family members, their community and in particular people who have been through similar experiences," Fassler said.

Syria captures Saddam's half brother

BY PATRICK QUINN

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraqi officials said Sunday that Syrian authorities had captured Saddam Hussein's half brother in Syria and handed them over to Iraq in an apparent goodwill gesture.

Sabawi Ibrahim al-Hassan, a former Sad-

Former adviser al-Hassan is suspected of financing insurgent fighting U.S. troops

dam adviser suspected of financing insurgents after U.S. troops ousted Saddam, was captured in Hasakah in northeastern Syria about 30 miles from the Iraqi border, two senior Iraqi officials said on condition of anonymity. They added that al-Hassan was captured and handed over to Iraqi authorities along with 29 other members of Saddam's collapsed Baath Party, whose Syrian branch has been in power in Damascus since 1963.

Officials in interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's office, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed al-Hassan's capture but gave no details on where it took place or when.

Al-Hassan was No. 36 on the list of 55 most-wanted Iraqis released by U.S. authorities after American troops invaded Iraq in March 2003, and he also was named one of the 29 most-wanted supporters of insurgents in Iraq. The United States had a \$1 million bounty on his head.

In a statement, Allawi's office said the arrest "shows the determination of the Iraqi government to chase and detain all criminals who carried out massacres and whose hands are stained with the blood of the Iraqi people, then bring them to justice to face the right punishment."

Al-Hassan's arrest came during a period of increased U.S. and Iraqi military activity against insurgents, who continued their campaign of violence against coalition forces and those Iraqis they believe are helping them or sympathize with them.

Meanwhile, two U.S. soldiers were killed Sunday and another two were wounded after apparently being ambushed in southeast Baghdad with a bomb and rifle fire, the military said.

The U.S. command said a Marine was killed Saturday during military operations in central Babil province.

In the northern town of Hammam Alil, 240 miles north of Baghdad, a bomb exploded inside the police headquarters, killing five people, including some police officers, said Khorsid Sultan, a coroner at the main hospital in Mosul.

The hospital also said four police officers were killed in an ambush while on patrol southwest of Mosul.

In Baghdad, gunmen attacked police heading to work in the western Amariyah district, killing two of them, police said. Police also found the body of an Iraqi woman, dressed in traditional black, with a sign that said "spy" pinned to her chest.

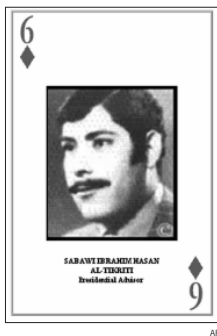
Under Saddam, al-Hassan led the General Security Directorate, responsible for internal security, especially cracking down on political parties opposing Saddam.

Al-Hassan was accused of torturing and killing political opponents while leading that body.

He later became a presidential adviser, the last post he held in the former regime.

The government statement said he had "killed and tortured Iraqi people" and "participated effectively in planning, supervising, and carrying out many terrorist acts in Iraq."

In December, Allawi accused Syria of harboring senior officials from Saddam's ousted regime, including al-Hassan. Qasem Dawoud, Iraq's minister in charge of national security, claimed that al-Hassan was supporting insurgents in Iraq from Syria, according to remarks published last year in Kuwait's Al-Rai Al-Aam daily.



Sabawi Ibrahim al-Hassan, a half brother of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, shown in this DOD playing card, has been captured, Iraqi officials said Sunday.

Al-Hassan's capture was the latest in a series of arrests the government hopes will deal a blow to the insurgency.

Iraqi authorities said Saturday they were close to capturing the country's most-wanted terrorist, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al-Qaida's mastermind in Iraq and believed to be behind much of the insurgent violence. One of al-Zarqawi's key aides and a man who served as his driver were arrested Feb. 20.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Saturday, at least 1,492 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,130 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defense Department. The figures include four military civilians.

The AP count is 12 higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Friday.

The British military has reported 86 deaths: Italy, 20; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 17; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan one death each.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ None.
The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Army Staff Sgt. Eric M. Steffeney, 28, Waterloo, Iowa; killed Wednesday when an explosive detonated in Tuz, Iraq; assigned to the 184th Ordnance Battalion, 52nd Ordnance Group, Fort Bragg, N.C.

Afghanistan army now tops 20,000

BY AMIR SHAH

The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — The number of troops in Afghanistan's new army topped 20,000 Sunday, as the United States steps up training of a force that is supposed to relieve Americans on the front lines against Taliban-led militants.

The 853 soldiers and officers of the 31st Battalion graduated Sunday morning in a joyful ceremony in the capital, Kabul. The Afghan National Army, or ANA, now numbers 20,694 and has another 3,000-4,000 soldiers in training.

"You young people must encourage others to follow you into the Afghan National Army," Gen. Abdullah, a senior Defense Ministry official who goes by one name, told the soldiers. "You are entrusted with the Afghan nation and must go like men to every corner of the country."

France helps train the senior officers, Britain the noncommissioned officers and the United States the regular soldiers. Instructors from other countries, including Romania and Mongolia, train troops on their mainly Soviet-era tanks and artillery.



Soldiers of the 31st Battalion of the Afghan National Army dance Sunday during their graduation ceremony at the Kabul Army Training Center. Afghanistan's army topped 20,000 with the graduation of 853 soldiers.

Several of the new soldiers said they had no fear of joining the battle against insurgents along the rugged Pakistan border.

The Afghan force is intended to replace armed factions tarnished by their role in Afghanistan's brutal civil wars and suspected of involvement in the country's heroin trade. More than 42,000 militia members have been disbanded under a U.N. program.

The force also is expected to take a growing role in the battle against militants in the country's south and east, often in conjunction with the 17,000-strong U.S. force focused on remote provinces along the Pakistan border.

Recruitment to the new army was initially dogged by desertions and poor pay.

But conditions have improved, and U.S. officials say six battal-

ions will train simultaneously starting next month, up from two at the start of last year, and the force is supposed to reach its full strength of 70,000 by the end of next year.

The U.S. military this month doubled the number of its soldiers embedded with the new army, extending the training effort into the field and letting ANA units call in U.S. airstrikes if they get into trouble.

2 held in '82 massacre

BAGHDAD — U.S. forces have arrested an Iraq father and son accused of participating in a 1982 massacre in the predominantly Shiite Muslim village of Dujaal after an assassination attempt on then-President Saddam Hussein that was widely regarded as a defining moment in his reign.

Senior U.S. officials said in interviews that Abdullah Rwayid and Muzhir Abdullah Rwayid were arrested Monday and charged with crimes against humanity for their alleged role in the killing of up to 400 people associated with the Dawa party, a Shiite group that carried out the attempt on Hussein's life on July 8, 1982.

Charges against the two detained men were referred to the Iraqi Special Tribunal, the entity responsible for trying those accused of crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide in Iraq between 1968 and 2003, the period in which Hussein's Baath Party ruled the country.

The charges arise from a series of events in Dujaal, located about 40 miles northeast of Baghdad, after the failed assassination attempt.

According to some reports, up to 400 people were killed. A senior U.S. legal adviser in Baghdad, who spoke on condition that he not be named, said the Rwayids were charged in connection with 147 deaths.

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Despite rules, women on Iraq war front lines

By ROBERT BURNS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — When a roadside bomb in Iraq exploded on Feb. 9, Army Sgt. Jessica M. Housby became the 21st female soldier killed in action since the war began nearly two years ago.

That may seem a small number, given that hostile deaths among U.S. troops recently surpassed 1,000 and is getting closer to 1,500 when fatal accidents and other nonbattle deaths are included.

But by historical measure it is high, and reflects the fundamentally different nature of this war, where even a truck driver such as Housby is a target.

No one is suggesting that women be kept off the modern-day battlefield. But some question whether an Army that is being reconfigured to respond swiftly and more effectively to conflicts such as the one in Iraq is placing some female soldiers in what amounts to the front lines of fighting.

As in past wars, women are barred from units assigned to direct ground combat. That keeps women out of the infantry, armor, artillery, combat engineers and Special Forces. But it does not keep them out of danger.

The nature of combat itself has changed a great deal in Iraq since the toppling of Baghdad in April 2003.

In Iraq, there is no front line in the traditional sense of armies fighting armies.

Thus it is not just infantrymen, trained to kill in close combat, who are dying in Iraq, although



Matthew Bundy, the brother of Army Sgt. Jessica M. Housby, an Illinois National Guardsman killed by a roadside bomb in Iraq, places a rose on her casket on Feb. 19. Deborah Bundy, Housby's mother, right, stands holding a U.S. flag during the ceremony in Rock Island, Ill.

they are taking the heaviest losses. Soldiers whose roles are categorized as "support," where most of the women in the U.S. military are found, sometimes find themselves in the insurgents' line of fire.

Housby, 23, from Rock Island, Ill., had been in Iraq since October as a member of the Illinois Army National Guard's 1644th Transportation Company. Two other female soldiers of the Illinois Guard have been killed in Iraq — one by mortar fire, the other by a roadside bomb.

In all, 31 female U.S. soldiers have died in the Iraq war, including 10 whose deaths were declared nonbattle, according to the Pentagon.

In the 1991 Gulf Persian War, five women were killed in action and 10 were nonbattle casualties.

Shortly after the Gulf War, the

Pentagon opened more military jobs to women, including piloting attack and scout helicopters. The military also spelled out the kinds of assignments that would remain

off limits — any job requiring a female soldier to "physically collocate and remain with" ground combat units that are closed to women.

The distinction then was clear. Now, the Army is redesigning its main fighting forces to make them "modular," or interchangeable.

Some in Congress are asking whether the reconfigured combat brigades have placed women in positions that violate either the letter or the spirit of the policies meant to keep women out of direct combat.

Rep. Duncan Hunter, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said recently that his committee is investigating the matter. David Chu, the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, said his office is "working closely with the Army staff" to review the matter.

Army leaders say they see no reason to doubt that the policy against assigning sex-integrated support companies to ground combat battalions is the correct one.

U.S. begins to talk of pulling U.N. inspectors out of Iraq

By EDITH M. LEDERER

The Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — After bloody discussions for nearly two years, the United States has quietly started low-key talks on ending the work of U.N. inspectors who are charged with dismantling Iraq's chemical, biological and long-range missile programs.

The administration of President Bush has come under pressure from the Iraqi government, which has been waging a public campaign to stop using Iraqi oil revenue to finance the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and wrap up its operations.

"This is a very important issue and one that we have been discussing for quite some time with the Iraqis and now with key members of the Security Council," Richard Grenell, spokesman for the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, said Friday. "Those discussions continue."

American officials had said repeatedly that the United States wouldn't formally discuss the future of the commission, known as UNMOVIC, until after the U.S.

weapons search in Iraq was complete.

Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Fedotov said Thursday that after the Iraq Survey Group's report and the recent Iraqi elections it was time for the Security Council to discuss the future of U.N. inspectors.

Fedotov, a member of UNMOVIC's board of commissioners, said that one issue the board discussed at a meeting this week was how these new developments "could have an impact on the process of what we call the final clarification of disarmament in Iraq."

"There is a broad feeling" that the Security Council should discuss these issues and that UNMOVIC and the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is responsible for dismantling any Iraqi nuclear programs, "should be involved in this process," he said.

"The mandate to UNMOVIC and IAEA was given by the Security Council, and the Security Council can make another decision, take an action in order to modify or to bring to an end this mandate," Fedotov said.

The council is expected to discuss UNMOVIC's next report in early March.

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IN THE WORLD

Pope makes first appearance after surgery

Pontiff waves from hospital window, but does not speak

BY BRIAN MURPHY
The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II surprised the world Sunday with his first public appearance since surgery — just moments after a Vatican official outside St. Peter's Basilica read the ailing pontiff's appeal for prayers.

No words were spoken by the 84-year-old pope in his one-minute greeting from Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic. But the unscheduled appearance, during which John Paul touched his throat fitted with a breathing tube, sent powerful messages about his struggle to recover.

The pope appeared alert as he sat and waved from a hospital window, which raised hopes he was making progress following a tracheotomy Thursday to ease a breathing crisis. It also displayed his personal determination to maintain continuity in the church.

The Vatican had previously announced John Paul would skip his weekly blessing — a 26-year tradition he didn't miss even after he

was shot in 1981 and was recovering from an operation in 1992.

The Vatican's undersecretary of state, Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, served as substitute on Sunday, reading a message from the pope while standing between the towering statues of St. Peter and St. Paul outside the basilica.

"Dear brothers and sisters, once again I address you from the Agostino Gemelli Polyclinic," Sandri told about 5,000 people in the square, relaying the pope's message. White drapes were drawn over the window where the pope often gives his weekly address.

Minutes later — at the hospital 2.5 miles away — curtains were pulled back from the pope's 10th floor suite. He was wheeled up to a closed window, where he waved with his right hand and made signs of the cross to about 200 people on the hospital grounds.

The pope, wearing his usual white robe, then touched his throat, but neither the inserted tube nor other signs of the operation were visible. His gestures



Pope John Paul II, flanked by Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano, looks through a window at the small crowd gathered in front of Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic on Sunday. The pontiff surprised the world Sunday with his first public appearance since surgery, just moments after a Vatican official outside St. Peter's Basilica read the ailing pontiff's appeal for prayers.

were strong and he appeared in good form.

The appearance gave the clearest sign the pope was improving since the surgery, but how and to

what extent remains unknown. The next official health update is expected Monday.

ANSA news earlier reported the pope showed no signs of infection,

citing unnamed medical sources. Any step toward recovery, however, is complicated by the pope's battle with Parkinson's disease.

One important decision facing the pope's doctors is how long to leave in the breathing tube, which draws in air instead of the nose or mouth. In some patients, the tube remains permanently.

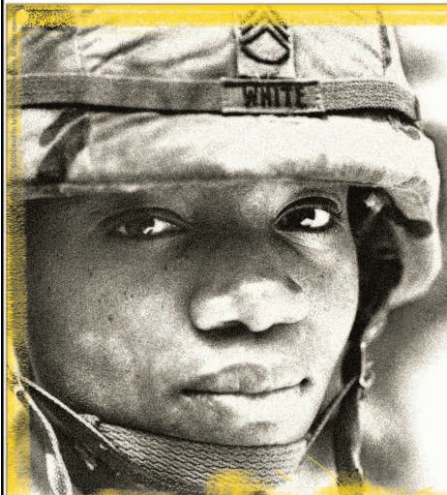
This is a particularly significant development because the pope has spent a lifetime savoring the art of the spoken word: as a young amateur actor, as a linguist with command of a dozen languages, and as pontiff, preaching in far-flung churches, airfields and stadiums.

Parkinson's has caused the pope's words to slurred and his sentences are often punctuated with small gasps.

Winded, the 84-year-old John Paul has often had to listen from his wheeled throne as his speeches are read out by aides.

John Paul is the pope with the largest reach in history, having visited 129 countries. He is considered the first pontiff to master the medium of television, and he broadcasts live on the Internet.

Church officials say he has sent a message of dignity, courage and acceptance of life's trials by remaining in the public eye despite his declining health.



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AN ARMY OF ONE

Despite warning, Clinton stops in Taiwan

The Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan — Former President Clinton visited Taiwan on Sunday despite China's warning that his visit could violate Washington's "one-China" policy, and he urged the rivals to set aside their differences and work closer together economically.

Taiwanese investors in China are giving hope to Chinese workers and could help reduce the possibility of a conflict between the two sides, Clinton told a packed auditorium in Taipei.

Clinton's one-day visit to Taiwan comes after China warned that the trip could violate the "one-China" policy under which the United States agrees to have no diplomatic ties with Taiwan and recognizes Beijing as China's sole government.

China and Taiwan split in 1949 amid civil war, but Beijing considers the democratic, self-ruled island to be Chinese territory. China's leaders balk at any actions they feel lend support to Taiwan's government, and they have repeatedly threatened war if Taiwan moves toward formal independence.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Qian said last week that Clinton, as former president, should be familiar with "China's solemn position on the Taiwan question."

This was Clinton's first visit to Taiwan since he was elected president in 1992. Many Taiwanese are fond of Clinton, who had made two trips to the island as Arkansas governor.

He was to have dinner with Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian later Sunday, officials said.



Mark Chen, vice chairman of the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, left; Wang Jing-pyng, chairwoman, second left; and an unidentified Taiwanese woman, present former President Clinton with clay pottery Sunday at the Taipei International Conference Center in Taipei, Taiwan. Clinton went to Taiwan to promote his memoir, despite Beijing's warning that his visit could violate Washington's "one China" policy toward the island.

Beijing: Nothing less than 'one China'

The Associated Press

BEIJING — China said Sunday that despite a declaration by Taiwan's president leaving open the possibility of eventual reunification with the mainland, relations can improve only if the self-ruling island accepts it is part of "one China."

"At present, the crux of difficulties between the two sides is that Taiwan authorities don't recognize the one-China principle," the government's Xinhua News Agency said, citing an unnamed Taiwan affairs spokesman.

China said it was responding to Thursday's joint

declaration by Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian and opposition leader James Song, in which they promised they would "not rule out the possibility of any model of relationship evolving on the basis of goodwill."

Their wording was chosen to include the possibility of eventual unification.

China called on the island's authorities to return to a 1992 "consensus," in which Beijing contends Taiwan accepted it is part of China.

China and Taiwan split in 1949, and Beijing has threatened to attack if the island declares formal independence.

Hillary's first endorsement?

The Associated Press

TOKYO — Former President Clinton said Sunday that his wife, Hillary, would be an excellent choice as the first female leader of the world's most powerful nation.

In an interview with Japan's TV Asahi, Clinton said he did not know whether his wife, a New York senator, has any plans to one day run for the presidency.

"I don't know if she'll run or not," he told the network, but added, "She would make an excellent president, and I would always try to help her."

Hillary Rodham Clinton has said she plans to run for re-election as New York senator in 2006. Speculation has periodically surfaced, however, that the 57-year-old former first lady may have her sights set for the presidency in 2008.

Results from a U.S. poll released last week showed that six in 10 American voters believe the United States is ready for a female president.

Fifty-three percent thought Sen. Clinton should try for the job, according to the survey by the Siena College Research Institute and sponsored by Hearst Newspapers.

Sen. Joseph Biden said Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press" that Sen. Clinton "is likely to be the nominee" and said he thinks "she'd be incredibly difficult to beat."

Amnesty International founder dies

LONDON — Peter Benenson, who founded Amnesty International more than four decades ago, died Friday night from pneumonia, the human rights organization said. He was 83.

In 1961, at the age of 40, he set up Amnesty International after reading an article about the arrest and imprisonment of two students in a cafe in Lisbon, Portugal, who had drunk a toast to liberty.

He initially envisioned Amnesty as a one-year campaign, but it went on to become one of the world's largest independent human rights organizations. Based in London, it now has more than 1.8 million members and supporters worldwide.

Spain braces for steep drop in temperatures

MADRID, Spain — The Ministry of Interior issued a cold weather warning Sunday, advising people not to travel and to take precautions, especially with children and the elderly.

"We are announcing the arrival of very cold Arctic air during Sunday night," the statement said.

Some regions in the interior of Spain could reach temperatures below minus 5 Fahrenheit and may not rise above freezing until after Tuesday, Spain's national meteorological center warned.

It added that cold winds of up to 56 mph could increase the chill factor significantly.

Snow was expected to fall even at sea level, and freezing conditions could make travel hazardous the warning said.

Japan claims world's longest overland tunnel

TOKYO — Japan created what engineers here call the world's longest overland tunnel on Sunday, when railway workers blasted through a final layer of rock with a governor and other dignitaries looking on.

The 16.4-mile Hakkoda Tunnel will become part of a new bullet train line under construction to link Tokyo with the northern city of Aomori about 360 miles to the north. The tunnel burrows under Mount Hakkoda in Aomori prefecture.

From The Associated Press

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Iran's nuke knowledge

VIENNA, Austria — By the late 1980s, members of a black market network had handed Iran all the basic knowledge the Middle Eastern country needed to set up technology that can be used to make atomic weapons, diplomats familiar with an investigation of Iran's nuclear ambitions said Sunday.

The officials, who are familiar with the work of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, spoke to The Associated Press on the eve of a board meeting of the U.N. nuclear watchdog that will discuss Iran and other potential world nuclear concerns.

Diplomats, who requested anonymity, said Saturday that the new revelations were significant because they indicated Iran had full possession of enrichment know-how from the black market network run by Abdul Qader Khan, the father of Pakistan's atomic bomb, earlier than previously believed.

From The Associated Press



Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon talks about peace efforts Sunday at his weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem.

Sharon: Bombing puts peace process in peril

BY RAVI NESSMAN
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said Sunday that peace efforts with the Palestinians would be frozen if they do not crack down on militant groups in the wake of a weekend suicide bombing that killed four Israelis outside a Tel Aviv nightclub.

Friday's attack and its aftermath broke two weeks of relative calm and strained recently warming relations between the Israelis and Palestinians following the election of moderate Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas last month. Dozens of people were wounded in the bombing.

There were conflicting accounts as to who was responsible for the attack. Islamic Jihad, a Palestinian militant group with leadership in Lebanon and Syria, claimed responsibility Saturday.

Abbas blamed the attack on a "third party," which

other Palestinian officials said was the Lebanese guerrilla group Hezbollah, which is backed by Syria and Iran. Hezbollah denied the accusation.

A senior Israeli military official said Hezbollah had nothing to do with the attack but was vigorously working to carry out other attacks on Israel. Police remained on heightened alert throughout the country Sunday.

Sharon blamed the attack on Islamic Jihad militants, working on the orders of their leaders in Syria. Syria denied involvement.

Abbas has resisted Israel's previous demands to crack down, saying he preferred diplomacy.

Sharon demanded Sunday that Abbas carry out an immediate operation against Islamic Jihad.

In Ramallah, Palestinian leaders decided Sunday to postpone an upcoming meeting in Egypt with radical Palestinian groups, which was to focus on firming up a cease-fire with Israel and on Palestinian reforms, Palestinian Deputy Prime Minister Nabil Shaath said.

Tension permeates vote in Kyrgyzstan

Some opposition candidates are excluded

BY JIM HEINTZ
The Associated Press

BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan — Kyrgyzstan's voters on Sunday cast ballots in a parliamentary election infused with an undercurrent of tension over the exclusion of some opposition politicians from the ballot.

Voting for one of the parliament's 75 seats was postponed for two weeks because a roadblock installed last week by demonstrators protesting the disqualification of candidates made it impossible to deliver ballots on time, according to the Central Elections Commission.

The election is being closely watched as an indication of whether Kyrgyzstan is pursuing a commitment to democracy or backing off the path that has distinguished it from other ex-Soviet Central Asian states over the past decade and a half.

The election also is expected to foreshadow how October's presidential election will be conducted. President Askar Akayev is prevented by the constitution from seeking a third term, but opposition forces have suggested that Sunday's vote could be manipulated to ensure a compliant parliament that would amend the constitution to allow him to run again.

Akayev denied that he wants another term. After voting Sunday he said, "I have not had, and do not have, intentions to change the constitution."

A prominent opposition leader, Roza Otunbayeva, complained Sunday that "the pre-election process wasn't transparent. Pro-government candidates had huge advantages," such as biased coverage in state-run or -influenced media.

Otunbayeva's exclusion from running was an issue of particular dispute. A former ambassador to the United States and U.N. envoy in Georgia, she was disqualified under a law that says candidates must have been a resident in Kyrgyzstan for the previous five years.

Several other former diplomats also were disqualified. Critics say Akayev has used diplomatic postings as a way of marginalizing opponents.

Akayev has accused Kyrgyzstan's opposition of disrespecting the law and of trying to launch a revolution with the help of foreigners.

On Sunday, the Foreign Ministry sharply criticized U.S. Ambassador Stephen Young over a recent newspaper interview that quoted him as saying that complications in democratic development could affect bilateral relations.



Two Kyrgyz men cast their ballots Sunday at a polling station in the village of Arashan 25 miles south of capital Bishkek. Kyrgyzstan faced a key test of its commitment to democracy in parliamentary elections Sunday amid tension over the exclusion of a number of opposition figures and prominent lawmakers in the former Soviet republic.

Rebel violence kills 14 in Nepal

BY BINAJ GURUBACHARYA
The Associated Press

KATMANDU, Nepal — At least 14 people died in a fresh burst of violence in southern Nepal on Sunday after communist rebels lifted a two-week highway blockade that had crippled the flow of essential supplies in protest at the king's recent power grab.

The rebels ambushed an army truck carrying soldiers on a regular patrol near the town of Palaiya, about 160 miles south of Katmandu, killing eight of them, police said.

Another 10 soldiers suffered injuries in the attack and have been transported to hospitals, said a spokesman at the army headquarters in Katmandu.

Meanwhile, in the nearby town of Butwal, suspected rebels fatally shot the town's police chief and his assistant on Sunday.

The rebels escaped after the attack.

Separately, insurgents killed four people in overnight attacks on villages in the south, police said. Villagers in the area have shown rare defiance of the rebels, killing 21 guerrillas in the past few days.

The rebels announced Saturday that they were lifting the blockade to ease the discomfort of the common people. However, they vowed to step up their campaign against the army.

The insurgents said the blockades were in protest at King Gyanendra's decision on Feb. 1 to sack the government, impose emergency rule and suspend civil liberties.

The monarch, who says he was forced to act because of the insurgency, has ignored repeated calls from the international community to restore democracy.

Opposition calls Tajikistan's election unfair

BY BAGILA BUKHARBAYEVA
The Associated Press

DUSHANBE, Tajikistan — Voters cast their ballots Sunday in Tajikistan's parliamentary elections pitting a fledgling opposition against the powerful ruling party of President Emomali Rakhmonov.

Critics accuse Rakhmonov, who came to power during the ex-Soviet country's civil war

of the 1990s, of stifling dissent. They say recent steps — such as a referendum two years ago that gave Rakhmonov the right to stay in power until 2020 — threaten the country's stability and hopes for democracy.

Six parties are contesting 63 seats in Parliament's lower house, with 41 lawmakers to be chosen through direct voting. The other 22 seats will be divided among parties that win at least 5 percent of the vote. Rakhmonov's Na-

tional Democratic Party is widely expected to keep its majority.

His only real challenger is the Islamic Renaissance Party, the core of the civil war opposition and now Parliament's only opposition party, with just two seats.

Election officials said turnout had reached 68.1 percent by 2 p.m., exceeding the minimum 50 percent needed to make the vote valid.

IN THE STATES

BTK suspect lived and hid in plain sight, police say

BY DAVID TWIDDY
The Associated Press

PARK CITY, Kan. — Dennis Rader, the man police believe is the BTK serial killer, hid for more than 30 years in plain sight. He lived in this suburb of Wichita, the city he is suspected of terrorizing, with a wife and two children. He led a Cub Scout troop and was active in his Lutheran church. As an ordinance enforcement officer for the local government, he once measured grass in a front yard with a tape measure to see if it was too long, police said.

On Saturday, police identified Rader as a suspect in the BTK killings and announced an end to their 31-year manhunt. Although no charges have been filed, a jubilant collection of law enforcers and community leaders told a cheering crowd they were confident the long-running case could now be closed.

Officials also said they connected a more deadly BTK, a self-coined nickname that stands for "Bind, Torture, Kill" — bringing his total to at least 10.

Authorities generally declined to answer questions in detail after

announcing the arrest, but Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said DNA evidence was the key to cracking the case.

Wichita television station KAKE, citing unnamed sources, reported that DNA from Rader's daughter, Kerri, was instrumental in his capture. On Sunday, KAKE anchor Larry Hattberg told CNN that the source said Rader was already under surveillance when his daughter's DNA was obtained.

BTK stalked fears throughout the 1970s in Wichita, a manufacturing center with 350,000 residents, with his grisly crimes and letters sent to police and media.

The killer stopped writing in the late 1970s but resurfaced about a year ago with a letter giving details of a 1966 slaying that had not previously been linked to BTK.

In Park City, the suspect's neighbors said he helped elderly neighbors with yard work but described him as an unpleasant man who often went looking for reasons to cite his neighbors for violations of city codes.

Messages left for Rader's family members were not returned on Saturday.



Wichita Police Chief Norman Williams gets a hug from District Attorney Nola Foulston during a news conference on Saturday after the arrest of a man suspected to be the BTK serial killer, who terrorized Wichita, Kan., throughout the 1970s and then resurfaced about a year ago.

Rader was being held at an undisclosed location, and it was not immediately clear if he had a lawyer. In Kansas, suspects generally appear before a judge for a status hearing within 48 hours of their arrest.

Prosecutor Nola Foulston said the death penalty would not apply to any crime committed between 1972 and 1994, when Kansas did not have the death penalty.

Along with his grisly crimes, the killer terrorized Wichita by sending rambling letters to the media, including one in which he named himself BTK for "Bind them, Torture them, Kill them."

In several of the letters, BTK included clues to his identity.

Police had long believed BTK was a graduate of Wichita State University, as Rader was. Letters sent in the past year included jewelry that police believed may have been taken from BTK's victims and the driver's license of one of the victims.

The two newly identified cases were similar to the early ones with one exception, Sedgwick County Sheriff Gary Stead said: The bodies had been removed from the crime scenes. One of the victims lived on the same street as Rader.

U.S. training program

WASHINGTON — Indonesia may resume participation in a U.S. military training program after an absence of more than a decade, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has determined.

Resumption generally is viewed as a first step in lifting the ban on military-to-military ties between the two countries.

The Bush administration restricted Indonesia's participation after its military failed to cooperate fully in the investigation of the killings there of two U.S. citizens in August 2002.

But Rice now has determined that Indonesia has and continues to cooperate with the FBI's investigation into the murders.

Time editor dies

NEW YORK — Henry A. Grunwald, a top Time magazine editor who led the publication as a modern voice in national and world affairs, then became U.S. ambassador to his native Austria, has died. He was 82.

Grunwald died Saturday of heart failure at his Manhattan home. Time editor in chief Norman Pearlstine said in a letter to readers that appears in the issue of the magazine on Monday. Grunwald was in the process of writing a book on defibrillators — a project that he began after the technology saved his life last year.

After Grunwald was named managing editor of Time in 1968, he began to award bylines and introduced new sections.

From The Associated Press

Search resumes for 9-year-old Fla. girl

The Associated Press

HOMOSASSA, Fla. — The search for a 9-year-old girl who vanished from her bedroom resumed Sunday, but torrential rains hindered the intensive hunt.

Hundreds of police and volunteers have turned out to search for Jessica Marie Lunsford, who was last seen Wednesday night when her grandmother tucked her into bed. The next morning, her father discovered she was gone.

Authorities have few clues. Citrus County Sheriff Jeff Dawsey has said a door at the home was unlocked and one of Jessie's dolls was gone.

Police have scoured the wooded

neighborhood around her house, but Dawsey said the girl's disappearance is not a confirmed abduction, and he hasn't ruled out anything.

As dawn broke Sunday, rain was falling across the region.

Forecasts called for strong thunderstorms to drop as much as 2 inches by nightfall.

"The weather has not been beneficial to my investigation at all," Dawsey said.

The night after Jessie's disappearance was reported, fog grounded a helicopter that would have searched the area with infrared radar.

Atlanta Braves pitcher Mike Hampton, a Homosassa native and his wife, Katia, have put up a \$25,000 reward for Jessie's return.

ers in the 2006 general election before it would become part of the Virginia Constitution.

Virginia law already prohibits same-sex marriages. However, many legislators argued that an amendment is necessary to ensure that courts do not force Virginia to recognize gay marriages or civil unions performed in other states.

From The Associated Press



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Va. gay marriage ban

RICHMOND, Va. — A proposed constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage in Virginia easily won final approval Saturday by both chambers of the General Assembly.

The measure would have to be approved again by the Legislature next year and ratified by vot-

Driver's license being equated to national ID

Some fear anti-terrorism tool could be used for other purposes

BY SUZANNE GAMBOA
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A proposal to stop potential terrorists from getting a U.S. driver's license may turn the licenses into a national ID card or help the government track gun purchases, opponents fear.

Conservatives, civil libertarians, gun owners and others share such concerns about a House-passed bill that broadly rewrites the rules for licenses and is portrayed as an anti-terrorism tool.

They fear that licenses, like Social Security numbers, could be used for purposes well beyond their original intent.

These opponents say the measure, passed by a 261-161 vote last month and supported by the White House, even could make it

possible for the government to monitor people's movements in the country through a chip in a license.

"Supporters of this don't seem to have the ability to look beyond how this system they are putting in place can change. They can't see how it can metamorphose into a national ID card," said Steve Lillenthal, director of the Free Congress Foundation Center for Privacy & Technology.

The House passed the legislation Feb. 10. Supporters are promoting the bill, which the Senate has yet to consider, as another way to fight terrorism.

Under the measure, states must verify they are giving licenses to U.S. citizens and legal residents. If they fail to do so, federal officers cannot accept licenses from residents of those states as proof of identity to get on an air-

plane or into a federal building, for example.

Lillenthal, whose think tank says it is politically and culturally conservative, asked what is there to stop the government from eventually requiring information about people's health, criminal backgrounds or gun ownership.

Larry Pratt, executive director of Springfield, Va.-based Gun Owners of America, says the bill "hands an open-ended blank check" to the government to collect information about people.

States can opt out of the requirements, but the bill would withhold money from states for driver's license improvements if they do.

The bill's sponsor, House Judiciary Committee Chairman Rep. James Sensenbrenner, R-Wis., told colleagues that the minimum standards already are met by most states and are intended to prod those whose lax licensing checks are "a magnet for foreign terrorists, criminals, home grown identity thieves and illegal aliens."

The Sept. 11 commission urged Congress last year to make it harder for people to get a driver's license, noting that some of the Sept. 11 hijackers fraudulently obtained licenses that allowed them to board commercial flights.



Microsoft founder Bill Gates addresses the National Education Summit on High Schools general session on Saturday in Washington. Gates said America's high schools are obsolete, meaning they "cannot teach all our students what they need to know today."

Governors launch effort to improve high school education in America

BY BEN FELLER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The nation's governors offered an alarming account of the American high school Saturday, saying only drastic change will keep millions of students from falling short.

"We can't keep explaining to our nation's parents or business leaders or college faculties why these kids can't do the work," said Virginia Democratic Gov. Mark Warner, as the state leaders convened for the first National Education Summit aimed at rallying governors around high school reform.

The governors say they want to emerge Sunday with specific plans for enacting policy, weary of statistics showing that too many students are coasting, dropping out or failing in college.

At least one agreement is likely. Achieve, a nonprofit group formed by governors and corporate leaders, plans to announce Sunday that roughly 12 states are committing to raise high school rigor and align their graduation requirements with skills demanded in college or work.

The high school summit drew at least 45 governors from the 50 states and five U.S. territories, along with top names in U.S. in-

dustrial and education. The leaders broke into groups late in the day to debate ideas, and planned to do the same through Sunday.

Most of the summit's first day amounted an enormous distress call, with speakers using unflattering numbers to define the problem. Among them: Of every 100 ninth-graders, only 68 graduate high school on time and only 18 make it through college on time, according to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.

The most blunt assessment came from Microsoft chief Bill Gates, who has put more than \$700 million into reducing the size of high school classes through the foundation formed by him and his wife, Melinda. He said high schools must be redesigned to prepare every student for college, with classes that are rigorous and relevant to kids and with supportive relationships for children.

"America's high schools are obsolete," Gates said. "By obsolete, I don't just mean that they're broken, flawed or underfunded, though a case could be made for every one of those points. By obsolete, I mean our high schools — even when they're working as designed — cannot teach all our students what they need to know today."

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Sign language-savvy 3-year-old saves mom's life

WESTHAMPTON, N.Y. — A mother's desire to teach her 3-year-old daughter sign language — and her father's training on knowing her girl address — ended up being a life-saver this week when the little girl told an emergency operator that her mother had stopped breathing.

When Kristin Comeau began to cough uncontrollably and had trouble breathing, she dialed 911 for help, but by the time the operator answered, her throat had closed further and she could not speak.

That is when little Ruby, who had been taught sign language by her mother as a hobby, came to the rescue. Comeau said she signed the word "help" to her daughter, who repeated it to the 911 operator.

Blacks discuss political priorities

LITHONIA, Ga. — Black leaders debated Saturday how to develop a checklist of political priorities that could be submitted to politicians seeking support from black voters.

Tavis Smiley, the PBS late-night talk show host, asked about 40 leaders to consider whether a checklist could further the black American political agenda. He initially offered the checklist, or "contract," as a political sword, but others said it would be better used as a self-improvement tool for black Americans.

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Pacific's \$2 off gas coupons

In response to "AAFPES can't spin away these letters" (letter, Feb. 24), asking if there are coupons in the Pacific theater for \$2 off gas, the answer is yes, there are. I used them until I transferred to Germany in November. These coupons are a nice little savings. In fact, Army and Air Force Exchange Service Pacific offers coupons for \$4 off haircuts, \$3 off dry cleaning and many others every week. I always assumed that it was AAFES' way of "giving back" to the community. I guess it only applies if you are stationed in Japan.

I guess now the big complaint is going to be that AAFES is raising prices on gas again by 10 cents. Funny thing is that the article says that, in the States, the average is \$1.89. So why then does AAFES think it needs to raise prices to \$2.07 for regular unleaded in Germany? I am sure not the station on Thursday in the States was \$1.89, how can AAFES justify charging its customers in Germany 18 cents more a gallon starting March?

Don't even get me started on the other gouging that AAFES does in Europe; for example, all of its combo meals at its restaurants (Burger King, Popeye's, Charles, etc.) cost more than a dollar more here than they do in Japan.

How many millions of dollars does AAFES make a year off the extra dollar it charges us every day?

Maybe it's time for the AAFES regional managers to talk, and get things straight; otherwise the folks serving in Europe will, and should, feel slighted.

Come on, AAFES, it's time to do the right thing for all the people you "serve!"

Master Sgt. Shawn Sorensen
Ramstein Air Base, Germany

Some came charging puzzling

In regards to the Feb. 10 article "Army now issuing new combat uniforms," I wonder why some of the changes were made.

I applaud the angled breast pockets (they're easier to access when wearing a Humvee Body Armor); new ankle pockets (can be accessed when seated in a Humvee); wicking T-shirt (they sure stay cool); and other improvements.

But I cannot understand why the Army would put the rank on the center of the chest when no one can see it? Or, why not fabric badge instead of pin? I cannot understand the pin-on badges rank placement? I have yet to speak with a soldier who can understand those two changes.

2nd Lt. Justin Baty
Camp Bucca, Iraq

Beret offers individuality

I thoroughly enjoyed "Bring back patrol cap" (letter, Feb. 22).

As a Brit embedded in Iraq, I would like

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to offer a slightly different view of the beret, which has been worn in all theaters by the British army in recent years.

The beret offers a degree of individuality through shaping and angle of wear.

In the British army, fashions vary from regiment to regiment — and officers and enlisted personnel can normally be identified by the way in which the beret is worn. Shock, horror within a homogenous society! However, it does have the ability to humanize those of us who wear the beret.

Properly fitted and shaped, it is comfortable and — while offering no ballistic protection — when the situation allows, it can reduce tensions on the street. For day-to-day wear and most jobs, it is ideal.

Having thought caution to the wind and put this missive forward, I hope that the beret issue does not raise emotions as the Combat Infantryman Badge has.

Lt. Col. Simon Wilson
Baghdad

Look at the whole picture

The writer of "Separation isn't mentioned" (letter, Feb. 9) is correct: There are no words in the First Amendment saying: "There shall be a separation, an impenetrable wall if you will, between church and state and never shall the two mix."

However, let me take this opportunity to educate the writer, as he — and I am sure many others — are only looking at half of the picture when attempting to argue constitutional issues.

Don't forget about the Supreme Court, the highest court in the land, which possesses the power of judicial review to interpret the Constitution. Supreme Court rulings and decisions become law. In Eisenhower v. Board of Education (1947), the Supreme Court set forth a definition of the Establishment Clause: "Neither a state nor the federal government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another. Neither can force ...

a person to go to or to remain away from church against his will, or force him to profess a belief or disbelief in any religion."

The court also held that government may not participate in religious affairs or impose taxes for their support.

"In the words of Thomas Jefferson," said the court, the Establishment Clause "was intended to erect 'a wall of separation between church and state.'"

Capt. Adam Jonas
Camp Arifjan, Kuwait

Do we need to be here?

A lot of people ask, do we really need to be here in Iraq? To me, the answer is most certainly yes.

While other members of my company flew up to get to our base, I was able to participate in a convoy. I was able to see the country firsthand.

Politically, we won a war that needed fighting but, on the ground, the children were without shoes. Many were begging for food. The ground literally looked like an apocalyptic wasteland. Getting into Baghdad and the more urban areas, there was a semblance of infrastructure.

A form of government is necessary, if only to put the will of the people into cohesive form and to set a course of action toward that goal. With a new government, Iraq would be able to embark on a course that would improve the quality of life, create jobs, and promote spiritual and economic growth.

With this would be the need to improve education. There was a time, under the banner of Islam, when Baghdad was known for its scholars, mathematicians, medicine and poetry.

With time and the guidance of a government dedicated to improving the living conditions of its people, Iraq might be able to achieve this again. First, however, the Iraqi people must endure the tribulation of terrorists, people who would try to throw war or rifle try to force the people away from actions they themselves would choose. These are the actions of a few scared men and women whose actions are destroying the very people they claim to represent.

The future stewards of Iraq's society will very shortly be chosen by the Iraqi people. The guardians of Iraq's society will be an Iraqi army. The laws of Iraq's society will be enforced by an Iraqi police force. That's my two cents.

Staff Sgt. Todd Samuelson
Iraq

Trudeau strip a 'piece of crap'

As a Marine colonel based in Iraq, I am offended that the supposed "newspaper" of the services would choose to include ["Doonesbury"], that left-wing-subversive-slandering piece-of-crap comic by [Garry] Trudeau. Can't Stripes find anything better to which to spend its money?

Col. John Crook
Al Asad Air Base, Iraq

BY GARRY TRUDEAU

Doonesbury Flashbacks



OPINION

U.S. can look to other lands for more troops

BY MAX BOOT

It is hard to pick up a newspaper these days without reading about Army and Marine Corps recruiting and retention woes. Nonstop deployments and the danger faced by troops in Iraq are making it hard for both services to fill their ranks. The same goes for the National Guard and reserves. (The Navy and Air Force, which are much less in harm's way, have no such difficulty.)

Just to stay at their present sizes, the Army and Marines are shoveling money into more advertising, extra recruiters and bigger enlistment bonuses. And yet it's clear to everyone (except, that is, President Bush and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld) that the U.S. military is far too small to handle all the missions thrown its way.

We need to not only maintain the current ranks but also to expand them in order to recover from a 1990s downsizing in which the Army lost 300,000 soldiers.

Some experts are already starting to wonder whether the war on terrorism might break the all-volunteer military. But because reinstating the draft isn't a serious option (the House defeated a symbolic draft bill last year, 402-2), some outside-the-box thinking is needed to fill up the ranks. In this regard, I note that there is a pretty big pool of manpower that's not being

tapped: everyone on the planet who is not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.

Since Sept. 11, Bush has expedited the naturalization process for soldiers. But to enlist, the Pentagon requires either proof of citizenship or a green card. Out of an active-duty force of about 1.4 million, only 108,803 are foreign-born (7 percent) and 30,541 are noncitizens (2 percent).

This is an anomaly by historical standards: In the 19th century, when the foreign-born population of the United States was much higher, so was the percentage of foreigners serving in the military. During the Civil War, at least 20 percent of Union soldiers were immigrants, and many of them had just stepped off the boat before donning a blue uniform. There were even entire units, such as the 15th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry (the Scandinavian Regiment) and Gen. Louis Blenker's German Division, where English was hardly spoken.

The military would do well today to open its ranks not only to legal immigrants but also to illegal ones, as important to untold numbers of young men and women who are not here now but would like to come. No doubt many would be willing to serve for some set period in return for one of the world's most precious commodities — U.S. citizenship. Open up recruiting stations from Budapest to Bangkok, Cape Town to Cairo, Montreal to Mexico City. Some

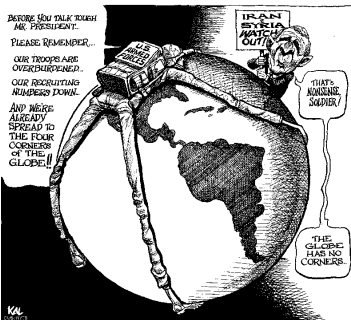
might deride those who sign up as mercenaries, but these troops would have significantly different motives than the usual soldier of fortune.

The simplest thing to do would be to sign up foreigners for the regular U.S. military, but it would also make sense to create a unit whose enlisted ranks would be composed entirely of non-Americans, led by U.S. officers and noncommissioned officers.

Call it the Freedom Legion. As its name implies, this unit would be modeled on the French Foreign Legion, except, again, U.S. citizenship would be part of the "pay." And rather than fighting for U.S. security writ small — the way the Foreign Legion fights for the glory of France — it would have as its mission defending and advancing freedom across the world. It would be, in effect, a multinational force under U.S. command — but one that wouldn't require the permission of France, Germany or the United Nations to deploy.

The Freedom Legion would be the perfect unit to employ in places such as Darfur that are not critical security concerns but that cry out for more effective humanitarian intervention than any international organization could muster. U.S. politicians, so wary (and rightly so) of casualties among U.S. citizens, might take a more lenient attitude toward the employment of a force not made up of their constituents.

An added benefit is that by re-



cruiting foreigners, the U.S. military could address its most pressing strategic deficit in the war on terrorism — lack of knowledge about other cultures. The most efficient way to expand the government's corps of Pashto or Arabic speakers isn't to send native-born Americans to language schools; it's to recruit native speakers of those languages.

Similar considerations early in the Cold War led Congress to pass the Lodge Act in 1950. This law allowed the Army Special Forces to

recruit foreigners not living in the United States with the promise of citizenship after five years of service. More than 200 Eastern Europeans qualified as commandos before the Lodge Act expired in 1959.

There's no reason we couldn't recruit a fresh batch of foreigners today. It would certainly be easier than trying to sweet-talk more troops out of recalcitrant allies or, these days, recruiting at U.S. high schools.

Max Boot is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

Too much at stake for Rehnquist to delay decision

RICHARD NIXON knew little more about him than that he was a Justice Department lawyer who presidential counselors believed had one of the best legal minds in America. The president even mispronounced his name when he appointed him to the Supreme Court over a dozen far-better-known prospects out of frustration from having two nominees rejected by the Senate.

In the decades since, William Rehnquist proved just how good Nixon's advice had been, demonstrating again and again an intellect that couldn't be denied no matter whether one agreed with his opinions. He guided the court through every philosophical shift with a firm hand. As the chief justice of the United States, he consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to preserve the equality and dynamics of the third branch of government.

It is, therefore, somewhat surprising that he has not declared his intention to leave the institution he holds in such high regard and to spend full time battling the thyroid cancer that has kept him away from the bench for prolonged periods. There have been numerous reports that this won't happen until June, if then.

While Rehnquist takes part in the twice-weekly conferences at the court and, according to insiders, still guides the deliberations, he spends most of his time working at home. He needs frequent attention apparently to clear the mucus from his throat and

wind passage. This is not sissy stuff and he has shown strength beyond what most medical experts expect from the average patient with his dilemma. But with each faltering public appearance there is renewed speculation about his imminent retirement.

With that, of course, comes similar conjecture about who will be appointed to fill the vacancy and whether it will be for the chief's position or that of an associate justice, with the new chief being a sitting member of the court. If Bush decides on the latter, the most likely nominee, according to insiders, would be Justice Antonin Scalia, the hard-nosed conservative who would most appeal to the Republican base. A close second would be Clarence Thomas, who often mirrors Scalia on major social issues such as abortion and the separation of church and state. Thomas is personally popular at the court.

Whichever way Bush decides, he can expect a major Senate battle with the future of Roe v. Wade and other sensitive issues in the balance. Backers of abortion rights and anti-abortion factions already are lining up for what promises to be explosive confirmation hearings.

The matter is complicated further because Arlen Specter, chairman of the confirming Senate Judiciary Committee, is himself ill with cancer. If the Pennsylvania Republican would be unable to chair hearings, it is believed he would name former chairman Orrin Hatch of Utah to conduct them.

Rehnquist's reported effort to stay until June is drawing fire from some publicly and others privately on grounds that he will be hard-pressed to battle advanced cancer and still conduct daily business for the court as aggressively as he should. Most of his ener-

gy, they argue, necessarily must go to fighting his illness. They also argue that the court stands a chance of being left with only eight justices, making it difficult to find a workable consensus.

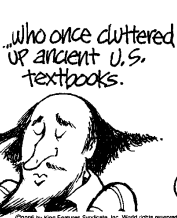
Since being appointed to the high court in 1971 and then elevated to chief justice in 1986, Rehnquist has fought a major back problem and a number of other less serious illnesses. He has battled through the problems without letting his duties suffer. He is trying to do that now, but at 80 some see his resolve as beginning to wane. Given the importance of the next few years in terms of a variety of issues it would seem prudent for him, if he feels his health is not improving, to make a decision sooner than later.

Don Thomason is former editor of Scripps Howard News Service.

Dan Thomason



Mallard Fillmore



BY BRUCE TINSLEY

Also:
The preferred
Liberal
Condition
for
White
Males.

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'Sideways' stands out at Independent Spirit Awards

Film earns 6 prizes, including best picture, actor, director

The Associated Press

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — The wine-country ramble "Sideways" dominated Saturday's Independent Spirit Awards, winning best picture and five other prizes, including acting honors for Paul Giamatti, Virginia Madsen and Thomas Haden Church.

Alexander Payne won the directing honor for "Sideways," while he and writing partner Jim Taylor shared the screenplay award.

"Sideways" also received five Oscar nominations, including best picture.

Giamatti, who stars as a sad-sack who finds the possibility of new love during a wine-tasting road trip with a buddy, earned the lead-actor prize at the awards, which honor films at least

partly financed outside the Hollywood studio system.

Catalina Sandino Moreno won best actress for "Maria Full of Grace," in which she plays a Colombian woman thrust into danger when she signs on to smuggle heroin into the United States. The role also earned Moreno a best-actress nomination from the Academy Awards.

Supporting honors went to Madsen as a wine enthusiast who becomes Giamatti's romantic interest and Church as his randy pal, who's out for one last fling before his wedding. Madsen and Church also received Oscar nominations.

"Garden State" — a romantic comedy written and directed by Zach Braff,

who also stars — was honored as best picture by a first-time filmmaker. "Maria Full of Grace" writer-director Joshua Marston won for best first screenplay.

Winners were chosen by the 9,000-member nonprofit Independent Feature Project/Los Angeles, which includes actors, directors, writers and other industry professionals.

Other winners:

■ Best foreign film: "The Sea Inside"

■ Best documentary: "Metallica: Some Kind of Monster."

■ Best debut performance: Rodrigo de la Serna, "The Motorcycle Diaries."

■ Best film shot for under \$500,000: "Mean Creek."



Actor Paul Giamatti reacts after winning for best male lead for his role in "Sideways" at the 20th IFP Independent Spirit Awards on Saturday in Santa Monica, Calif. At right is co-star Thomas Haden Church, who won earlier as best supporting actor.

Oscar organizers want awards-worthy show

By DAVID GERMAIN

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — It's been a quiet Academy Awards season — maybe too quiet for Oscar planners worried that Hollywood's annual dress-up ball will follow other entertainment awards shows into TV Apathy Land.

The movies have not caught the public's eye in a big way. There is

no huge best-picture front-runner for fans to rally behind. Even Hollywood studios, whose executives might sell their first-born to win an Oscar, generally have kept a lid on their brazen awards campaigning, leaving no juicy gossip to spice up the season.

The Oscars already had been on a general ratings decline in recent years before their cousins — the Emmys, the Grammys, the Tonys and the Golden Globes — fell into the ratings dump.

The big issue Sunday night is not so much whether "Million Dollar Baby" or "The Aviator" takes best picture, but whether the granddaddy of awards shows still can find an audience. And if it can, whether people will like what they see.

"More suspense clouds are looming over this Oscar show than any other, and it's not about who's going to win," said Tom O'Neil, author of the book "Movie Awards."

The most recent Emmys, Grammys and Golden Globes all took huge ratings tumbles, and last June's Tonys drew 6.5 million viewers, the smallest audience ever for Broadway's biggest night — a sign audiences might be growing fatigued by the endless parade of awards shows.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and Oscar show producer Gil Gates have taken steps to jazz up the show, which has dragged on for an interminable four hours some years.

After a decade under the safely comfortable hand of such masters of ceremonies as Billy Crystal, Whoopi Goldberg and Steve Martin, the Oscars this time feature Chris Rock as host. Rock already has mouthed off that awards shows are "idiotic," though he has hinted he will play nice during the show. Some viewers might tune in hoping he plays bad boy, instead.

Cents and Sensibility

Money tip of the day

Germs at work

The Associated Press

You probably clean vigorously at home, at least occasionally. But how often does this happen at work? Maybe not as effectively as you might wish or suspect, according to a five-city study of germs found in office settings.

Charles Gerba, a microbiologist at the University of Arizona, collected samples from office buildings in Atlanta, Chicago, New York City, San Francisco and Tucson, Ariz., last fall to determine how much human parainfluenza 1 virus was

present. The virus is responsible for common respiratory infections, such as pneumonia and bronchitis.

The survey collected samples from common areas: telephone mouthpieces, computer mice, desktops, doorknobs and handles, conference rooms, light switches and office cubicles.

Conference rooms were found to have far fewer germs than cubicles, while desktops had the most of the tested surfaces. In all office buildings, the light switch was the least contaminated site.

Razzies 'honor' Rumsfeld, Bush for 'Fahrenheit' clips

Halle Berry actually shows up to accept her worst actress trophy

By MIKE CIDONI

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Hoisting her Academy Award in one hand and newly won Razzie in the other, Halle Berry revealed in a career low point.

"Omigod, oh my God," Berry gasped Saturday night, feigning excitement. "I never in my life thought that I would be here, winning a Razzie. It's not like I ever aspired to be here, but thank you."

Berry was named worst actress for 2004's action bomb "Catwoman," which also took the prize for worst film at the 25th annual Razzies, an Oscar spoof that trashes Hollywood's worst.

President Bush won the worst-actor award for his appearance in news and archival footage of Michael Moore's satirical documentary "Fahrenheit 9/11." Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was voted worst supporting actor for "Fahrenheit 9/11," while Britney Spears' fleeting cameo in the documentary brought her the worst supporting actress award.

Razzies founder John Wilson said the prizes were not meant to mock Moore's film, only the statements Bush and the others make while "putting their highly paid, highly skilled feet in their mouths repeatedly and sucking on them."

Berry, one of several Oscar-winning actors to be dishonored by the Golden Raspberry Award Foundation, was the first actor to accept a Razzie in person since Tom Green did so for his part in



WARNER BROS. PICTURES/AP

Halle Berry was picked Saturday as worst actress for 2004's action bomb "Catwoman," which also took the prize for worst film at the 25th annual Razzies.

2001's "Freddy Got Fingered."

Berry, who wore a simple black dress, explained why she showed up at the ceremony.

"When I was a kid, my mother told me that if you could not be a good loser, then there's no way you could be a good winner," she said.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs	\$1.3635
Dollar buys	€0.7388
Japanese yen (Feb. 28)	102.06
South Korean won (Feb. 28)	982.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	\$1.377
British pound	\$1.5137
Canada (dollar)	1.2397
Denmark (kroner)	6.5332
Egypt (pound)	5.9899
Europe	\$1.3240/752
Hong Kong (dollar)	7.7994
Hungary (Forint)	139.69
Iceland (krona)	60.665
Israel (Shekel)	4.3611
Japan (yen)	105.21
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2515
Norway (kroner)	6.2595
Philippines (Peso)	49.656
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	1.7501
Singapore (dollar)	1.0286
South Korea (won)	1,007.90
Switzerland (Franc)	1.0131
Thailand (Baht)	36.45
Turkey (New Lira)	140.45

(Military exchange rates are those payable to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance only. South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For financial currency exchange rates, see the purchasing power parity rates. (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany with your local currency at the exchange facility. Commercial rates are inter-bank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except where the pound, which is measured in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

PRECIOUS METALS

New York Merc close	
Gold	\$434.90
Silver	\$7.251

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.50
Discount rate	2.50
3-month market rate	2.50
3-month bill	2.74
30-year bond	4.54

Sources: The Associated Press, Bank of America

Boston cop count up

MA BOSTON — Boston Police Commissioner Kathleen M. O'Toole has authorized an additional 90 police officers to the force this year, but police union officials said the new hirings are not enough.

"We're trying to catch up with the attrition that has occurred during the past few years," O'Toole said.

Despite the additional officers, the Boston Police Department still will be down about 150 officers, or 11 percent, from five years ago. The Boston Globe reported, citing department statistics.

Last year, the police force peaked at 1,956 officers, compared with 2,195 in 1999.

Lost boys rescued

TN DAYTON — An overnight search for two young brothers who wandered away from their mountain home ended happily when rescuers found them in a rugged ravine and pulled them to safety.

The boys — ages 9 and 7 — did not appear to be hurt after rescue workers used retrieval baskets and ropes to haul them out of the steep ravine, which was several miles away from their home.

"This is definitely the way it is supposed to end," said county E-911 director Charles Riggs. "You can't know how it feels for a rescue person to find somebody in decent condition. It's just as emotional on the rescuers as on the parents."

The boys, whose names were not immediately released, were reported missing by their parents. The search involved 150 officers, some of them on horseback, and a state aircraft with special nighttime-detection equipment.

Paper baler death

CA OAKLAND — California state regulators are investigating the death of a man who was crushed after falling into a paper baler at a recycling plant and turning on the machine, authorities said.

Teaglas Espinoza, 32, was trying to untangle wiring in the area where paper is fed into a two-story-tall baling machine when he tumbled onto a weight-sensitive platform in a collection well, activating the baler, said Alameda County Coroner's spokesman Dan Apperson.

Espinoza was dead by the time paramedics arrived at the plant.

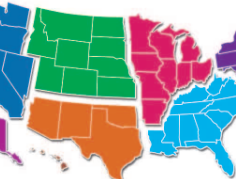
Bats flock to schools

TX CAMERON — Bats have invaded some of the schools in this Central Texas town, causing one elementary school to clear out two classrooms.

Bats that got into Ben Milam Elementary through tiny openings were found in toy boxes in those two classrooms.

"It's difficult because you're dealing with young kids and all they have ever heard about bats is that they are bad, like with vampires and Batman, and all," said Mike Noker, director of operations for the Cameron Independent School District, about 60 miles northeast of Austin.

This is the third year the school district has had to deal with the bats, which are the Mexican free-tailed variety, Noker said.



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

The animals pose two main health risks — rabies from bites and bacterial and fungal diseases from their droppings, said Beverley Nix, a zoonosis control veterinarian for the state.

Store clerks stabbed

VT RUTLAND — A 23-year-old woman is being held in lieu of \$50,000 bail after being charged with stabbing two store clerks during a robbery attempt.

Neither of the men stabbed suffered life-threatening injuries. Mia Hendricks pleaded innocent in Vermont District Court in Rutland to a charge of assault and robbery with a dangerous weapon and two charges of attempted aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

Rutland City Police said she stole \$359 at knife-point from the Short Stop on Grove Street.

Hendricks allegedly told police she needed money to pay off a group of New York heroin dealers to whom she was in debt.

Wolf breeding halted

SC COLUMBIA — The federal government will suspend a red wolf breeding program at Bull Island that has played a key role in saving the endangered species from extinction.

A family of red wolves that roamed the island will be shipped to other federal preserves because wildlife managers say the animals are needed more at those sites.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said it hopes to bring red wolves back to the thickets of Bull Island, near Charleston, in the next



Giddy up!

Aletta Husmann, 4, gallops along on her stick horse in a yard in Houston, while she waited to see the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Parade.

couple of years. But federal officials said they could not give a specific time. And they conceded that the South Carolina program isn't as important to wolf recovery efforts as it once was.

Since 1987, the government has kept pairs of red wolves on Bull Island so they would breed and raise pups in the wild.

Headly crime fighter

CO FORT LUPTON — Kristi's unborn child will learn one day how he or she helped Mom try to stop a robber.

Kristi emulated her version of the Action Jackson cop figure and dove headfirst into the stolen car of a robber who had just grabbed cash from her register at a Family Dollar Store.

"I was trying to get the keys out of the ignition," recounted Kristi, who asked that her last name not be used.

"I had went in between the window and the door panel out of my own free will!" said Kristi, who was recuperating from cuts and bruises to her head.

Kristi was taken to a hospital, and both she and her unborn baby are doing fine, she said. Police continue to search for the robber.

Legal moonshine

WV SUMMERSVILLE — Tired of tourists at his winery constantly asking where they could get some moonshine, Rodney Fackmire decided to build his own distillery.

But despite producing Southern Moon Corn Liqueur since 2002, Fackmire has trouble getting it into the hands of the very tourists so eager for a taste of a legal version of the legendary backwoods beverage.

State law prohibits him from selling hard liquor directly to customers — a right that's reserved for West Virginia's 159 licensed liquor stores.

Fackmire hopes new legislation proposed in the West Virginia Senate and House will change his fortunes. The bill would allow "mini distillers" to sell their products directly to customers.

Under the legislation, mini distilleries would be defined as producing less than 20,000 gallons, or about 10,000 bottles, of hard liquor a year.

Anti-war yard displays

CA SACRAMENTO — One week after an ear-splitting, 300-person debate broke out in front of Stephen and Virginia Pearcey's home, the couple's political protest art is up again.

The Pearceys sparked a national free-speech debate after hanging a soldier's uniform from a noose. But neighbors say the recent display is just a high note in the couple's two-year political filibuster. And they are ready for it to end.

"It's just continued attention to our block that we have no control over," Harra Cohen said. "It's a nuisance."

The sign posted recently — showing a flag in the shape of the United States being flushed down a toilet — graced the house in various forms on the past two Fourth of July holidays. Cohen said. The recent incarnation said "Thanks to Mr. Bush!" on the side.

"This guy has a lot of time on his hands," Cohen said.



Just monkeying around

Two juvenile Japanese macaques play in the snow at the Central Park Zoo in New York.



A little shut-eye

Michael Johnston, 5, from Gustine, Texas, sleeps among his father's saddle, tack and boots during the Tucson Rodeo in Tucson, Ariz.



A wet game of fetch Retrievers Bushcot, left, and Moonshine return a buoy to shore that their owner, Ed Sims of Gloucester City, N.J., threw in Batsto Lake at Wharton State Forest in Washington Township, N.J.



Chilly cleanup

Kenneth Coaley uses a snow blower to clear the parking lot behind the Mohican Apartments in New London, Conn.



Look out below!

Building workers remove ice from the side of a building in New York.



Watch this move

Nicholas Sharrett, 5, and his father, Dwayne, chase down a puck while playing ice hockey at a drain in the city sewer system.



Explosive view

The Korovin volcano near the village of Atka, Alaska, erupts and sends ash and steam to about 8,000 feet in the air.

Violence bill on hold

HI HONOLULU — Violence against referees seems to be a more deeply rooted problem in Hawaii than the combativeness of a few athletes, the chair of the Senate's Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee said.

A bill that would have made it a felony to attack a referee appears to have met its end — at least for now — before the committee.

Under current law, only school employees, prison guards and other correctional workers are given special treatment under assault statutes. Otherwise, intentionally causing another person bodily injury is a misdemeanor offense.

College gets an asteroid

NY CORTLAND — The State University of New York at Cortland is getting an alumna gift that is out of this world.

Literally. The upstate New York school will share an honor that only a dozen or so other American universities have — an asteroid named after it.

The five-mile-long, potato-shaped asteroid is 125 million miles from Earth. It takes about three Earth years to orbit the sun.

The gift is from 1970 graduate Wendee Levy, whose husband is a prominent amateur astronomer.

A slithery surprise

FL ST. PETERSBURG — Shannon Scavotto was running late for work when he opened the toilet to throw out a tissue. Inside was a snake as thick as a child's wrist, its diamond-shaped head sticking 10 inches out of the toilet.

Scavotto fashioned a noose out of some PVC pipe and string and grabbed a dark green pillowcase. By now the snake had recoiled back into the bowls of the toilet.

Scavotto realized he had about 5 feet of snake and it was still coming. The snake was about 6 feet long.

Scavotto later learned he had pulled an African rock python from the toilet. Snake experts said the python, which isn't venomous, must have escaped someone's home and slithered down a drain into the city sewer system.

Inmate health care

TX DALLAS — Lapses in medical care in the Dallas County jail system have resulted in undetected illnesses, excess costs and risks to the public, a new study of conditions at the jail found.

The 52-page report includes 38 specific recommendations and suggests that the county review its contract with the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston.

The center has handled health care in the jail system since October 2003. About 90,000 inmates were incarcerated in the system last year.

The report indicates problems in how sick inmates are screened, potential dangers in how they are housed, inadequate medical and jail staff, and virtually no process for spotting inmates with tuberculosis. TB cases pose a risk to the public, the report states.

Disabled veterans' funds

UT OGDEN — Disabled veterans in Utah seek and re-

ceive less federal money than those in many other states, veterans' representatives say. Officials attribute the disparity to the state's underfunding of outreach programs and the West's cultural emphasis on self-reliance.

Utah's 160,000 veterans receive \$140 million annually in federal compensation and pension money; Maine's 145,000 veterans receive almost \$270 million.

Education funds ignored

IL CHICAGO — Mayor Richard M. Daley says the state's \$53 billion state budget proposal ignores an equitable way to fund public education. Daley wants a tax swap that shifts the burden of public education from property taxes toward increased sales and income taxes. Gov. Rod Blagojevich said he isn't convinced the state must increase income or sales taxes to solve inequities in school funding.

Water rights deal

NM BERNALILLO — Bernalillo wants to buy water rights for future growth. The community is interested in water rights that haven't been used for a decade or more. Town manager Lester Swindle said Bernalillo isn't interested in forcing anyone to sell water rights, but people who no longer need their rights for irrigation could earn some money.

Parent abuse alleged

NH LACONIA — A Belmont man accused of holding down his 10-year-old stepson while the boy's mother stabbed him claims he was driven to the hospital by the boy's abusive behavior.

Stephen Weiner's plans to use a "battered parent syndrome" defense are laid out in papers filed in Belknap County Superior Court by his lawyer, James Carroll.

Weiner, 49, and his wife Jacqueline, 36, are accused of assaulting the 10-year-old and his 13-year-old brother for months. Both have pleaded innocent and are free on bail. The boys are in state custody.

Discrimination lawsuit

AL BIRMINGHAM — The University of Alabama System has agreed to pay former Alabama-Birmingham President Ann Reynolds \$475,000 to settle her discrimination lawsuit against the system's board of trustees. Reynolds claimed she was forced out in 2002 because of her age and gender. The system and its trustees did not admit wrongdoing in the settlement.

Prison warden resigns

CO DENVER — The warden of the privately run Brush Correctional Facility for Women has resigned and five officers face sexual misconduct and contraband charges.

Warden Rick Soares quit Tennessee-based GRW, which owns the 250-bed prison in Brush, on Feb. 18, said Alison Morgan, spokeswoman for the state corrections department. The warden was not implicated in any wrongdoing.

The corrections department referred contraband allegations involving two staff members and one inmate and sexual misconduct allegations involving three staff members to the district attorney.

Stories and photos from wire services

FACES

Awaiting the verdict

NBC to debut new 'Law & Order' series, 'Trial by Jury'

BY HAL BOEDEKER

The Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel

If the idea of another "Law & Order" makes you fear for the future of television, don't judge. "Trial by Jury" might seem. The fourth drama in the franchise delivers a surprisingly potent mix of compelling characters and plots.

Creator Dick Wolf deftly explores the personal ambition and media manipulation that can drive the legal process. He guides the NBC series, which debuts Thursday, with a showman's sure touch.

The first two episodes are mandatory for "Law & Order" fans because Jerry Orbach plays Lennie Briscoe for the last time. The actor, who died in December, remains a forceful pro in his final work.

Bebe Neuwirth lifts "Trial by Jury" with her striking performance as Tracey Kibre, an assistant district attorney. The actress who was Lilith Crane on "Cheers" expertly delivers the caustic dialogue. But she also invests the show with welcome humanity when Kibre doubts herself or worries about strategy.

The show surrounds Neuwirth with fine actors. Amy Carlson of "Third Watch" stands out as calm Kelly Gaffney, another prosecutor.

'Law & Order: Trial by Jury'

Cast: Bebe Neuwirth, Jerry Orbach, Amy Carlson, Kirk Acevedo, Fred Dalton Thompson.

Where and when: The NBC drama debuts in the States on Thursday. It moves to its regular slot on Fridays the next night.

"Trial by Jury" stocks up on noteworthy guest stars. The premiere features Candice Bergen as a judge, Annabella Sciorra of "The Sopranos" as a defense attorney and Sam Waterston of "Law & Order." Bergen returns for the second episode, which features Peter Coyote as a defense attorney and "Law & Order" alumna Carey Lowell.

The third episode brings on Lorraine Bracco, the shrink from "The Sopranos," as a defense attorney. Filming in New York also allows "Trial by Jury" to draw on some of Broadway's best young actors, such as Ben Shenkman and Aidan Gillen.

They are all working in a show that's bracing for its cynicism.

"Trial by Jury" shatters any idealistic take on the courtroom in the first three episodes, with dark stories about a theater producer, a career criminal and a vigilante.

Along with nifty plot twists, the drama supplies tantalizing close-ups of everything from jury consultants to jury deliberations.

The plots pack a punch because "Trial by Jury" unfolds with intelligence and authority. The show's jaded quality feels authentic and essential, not a bit of show-business posturing.

If "Trial by Jury" sides with the prosecutors, it still frankly depicts their maneuvering and political aspirations. District Attorney Arthur Branch (Fred Dalton Thompson) might have a pleasing, no-nonsense style, but he's always looking out for No. 1.

The guest stars who play the defense attorneys are not at a disadvantage dramatically. Sciorra, Coyote and especially Bracco feast on some of the juiciest material this season.

"Trial by Jury" should be good news for NBC, which could use another new hit drama to go along with "Medium." The new "Law & Order" offers a rejuvenating jolt for the franchise. It's less grim than "Special Victims Unit" and far less dependent on one actor, as "Criminal Intent" is on Vincent D'Onofrio.

"Trial by Jury" might not be doing anything new, but it's telling stories extremely well. The verdict: Long may this court be in session.

Hayek, Cruz arrive in hybrid cars

Salma Hayek and Penelope Cruz kicked off the Oscar weekend party scene at the "Rock the Earth" event organized by Global Green USA in Los Angeles.

Oscar presenters Hayek and Cruz are among the celebrities who planned to support Global Green USA by arriving at the Academy Awards in hybrid cars.

"With global warming threatening us all, driving a fuel efficient car like a hybrid is something that everybody can do to protect our planet," Hayek said at Thursday's "Rock the Earth."

"I personally own and drive a hybrid car, and I love it."

The event was also attended by Oscar presenter Orlando Bloom, nominee Julie Delpy, actress Kate Winslet, and Chris Muhl of the Los Angeles Lakers.

Tim Robbins, last year's supporting actor Oscar winner for "Mystic River," played a short set at the party as "Bob Roberts," the corrupt right wing folk singer he portrayed in the similarly titled 1992 film.



Cruz



Hayek

Actress goes into labor at party

Actress Holly Robinson Peete, pregnant with her fourth child, was partying at a pre-Oscar bash when she went into labor in Beverly Hills, Calif.

"One minute she's grooving, the next minute she's having water breaks," said Michael Lewittes, a producer for "Access Hollywood" who was covering Thursday's party.

Her husband, Carolina Panthers quarterback Rodney Peete, was not at the party.

The 40-year-old actress gave birth to a boy early Friday and was doing "great," said her publicist, Patti Webster.



Peete

Loretta Lynn sidelined by back pain

Back pain is keeping country legend Loretta Lynn off the stage.

The 69-year-old singer postponed Friday's Oklahoma City concert and a Saturday show in Fort Worth, Texas, because of pain from a back injury.

Lynn is starting a rigorous tour after winning a Grammy for her comeback album "Van Lear Rose." The album, a collaborative effort with White Stripes singer Jack White, also earned the team a Grammy.

Lynn now has three Grammys; her first came in 1971.

A DCF Concerts spokesperson said Lynn's Oklahoma City concert will probably be rescheduled for June.



Lynn

Manilow opens new Vegas show

Barry Manilow has opened his new Las Vegas Hilton show to the public, crooning favorites such as "Mandy," "Copacabana" and "It's a Miracle."

Elton John and Steve Nynn were among those in the full-house audience of 1,700 Thursday as Manilow belted out familiar tunes and a new offering, "The Here to Las Vegas."

"Manilow: Music and Passion" is booked for 24 weeks. Including breaks, it is due to run into 2006.

The 58-year-old entertainer has a desert home a short distance away in Palm Springs, Calif.



Manilow



Bebe Neuwirth, left, as Assistant District Attorney Tracey Kibre and Lorraine Bracco as Carla Grizzano appear in a scene from "Law & Order: Trial by Jury."

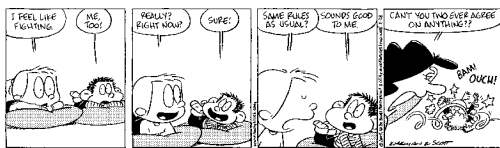
Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



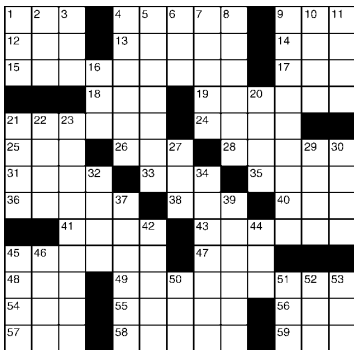
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Make inquiries
- 4 Bonfire leftovers
- 9 Dem.'s rival
- 12 Nixon was his veep
- 13 La — Opera House
- 14 Equal (Pref.)
- 15 Phanto
- 17 Wilde-beest
- 18 Shared by us
- 19 Situated below
- 21 Urge on
- 24 "Nuts!"
- 25 Cattle call?
- 26 Work unit
- 28 Upside-down "e"
- 31 Babies' nutriments
- 33 Bando of baseball
- 35 Song-writer Gus
- 36 Less extroverted
- 38 "Without a doubt"
- 40 Bottom line
- 41 Smell to high heaven
- 43 Cell terminals
- 45 "Dragnet" sergeant
- 47 Uncooked
- 48 Journal
- 49 Absolutely
- 54 "— la-la!"
- 55 Lucy's pal
- 56 Thee
- 57 Immature newt
- 58 Crosses
- 59 Encountered

Down

- 1 Melody
- 2 Schuss
- 3 Small barrel
- 4 Perspicacious
- 5 Bugaboos, e.g.
- 6 "Hee —"
- 7 African antelope
- 8 Lord Wimsey's creator
- 9 Much relied-on, as an assistant
- 10 A slave to crosswords?
- 11 Serve tea
- 12 Polloi precursor
- 20 Bulletin board item
- 21 Little demons
- 22 Ark builder
- 23 Author's protection
- 27 Festive
- 29 Roller coaster shout
- 30 Picnic invaders
- 32 Burpee buy
- 34 Crudite
- 37 Library patron
- 39 Tangles
- 42 Japanese city
- 44 WWII propaganda agcy.
- 45 Drifting ice sheet
- 46 Santa's runaway
- 50 Abbott's first basement
- 51 P.E. venue
- 52 Wedding tool
- 53 Historic boy king

Answer to Previous Puzzle



2-28 CRYPTOQUIP

LYFX LHBTW GHSQ SQFI
NBUG AFTT F
XQAYIHTNWJAFTTU
AYFTTQINQW OQEGHI?
F IJIAHSOBXQE
Saturday's Cryptquip: IF YOU'RE TOLD TO GO
FIND AND INTERVIEW A SEVEN-FOOT GUY, I'D
SAY IT'S A TALL ORDER!
Today's Cryptquip Clue: T equals L

STRIPE SERVICE DIRECTORY

your daily guide to navigating
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Spans, fully loaded, hard top

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Autos for Sale 142

Ford Mustang Cobra '94, US

Spans, fully loaded, hard top

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Autos for Sale 142

Porsche 944 '95 Targa, auto

Spans, fully loaded, hard top

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All-Pro WR Muhammad agrees to join Bears

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — All-Pro receiver Muhsin Muhammad agreed to a six-year contract with the Chicago Bears one day after being released by the Carolina Panthers.

Muhammad was cut by Carolina on Friday because the Panthers did not want to pay a \$10 million roster bonus due on Tuesday. It didn't take long for him to find a new home, and the Bears will give him a \$12 million signing bonus, which is guaranteed money.

"I don't think there is one person that's a Superstar in this sport that can totally revolutionize or change a team," he said. "But I have a lot of experience at what I do, and I'm going to bring that experience to Chicago. I'm going to bring my leadership skills and hopefully I influence enough people to make the team better."

Muhammad, who will be 32 in May, comes off a strong season despite the Panthers having spiraled from NFC champions to 7-9. He caught 93 passes, led the league with 1,405 yards and had 16 touchdowns as the main target after Steve Smith broke his leg.

"He's a guy who makes plays," Bears receivers coach Darrell Drake said on the team's Web site. "He just brings a lot of experience and savvy and a lot of intangibles to the organization that you just can't coach."

"I think it says that we're serious about improving our team and making a serious run," Bears coach Lovie Smith said. "We've identified some places where we thought we needed some more players. A receiver was one of those. To be able to get a receiver like this will definitely help you get some momentum going into the rest of free agency and, of course, the draft coming up."



All-Pro receiver Muhsin Muhammad agreed to a contract with the Chicago Bears one day after being released by Carolina.

Rocca wins World Cup slalom; Miller crashes out again

KRANJSKA GORA, Slovenia — Italy's Giorgio Rocca won a World Cup slalom Sunday in which Bode Miller crashed out of yet another race to further diminish his lead in the overall standings.

Austria's Benjamin Raich, Miller's main rival, was third, and is now just 31 points behind the American.

Rocca charged masterfully on the lower section of the course to finish in 1 minute, 34.95 seconds. Sweden's Andre Myhrer was a surprising second, 0.21 seconds behind, and Raich was 0.25 seconds back.

"It's fantastic," said Rocca, who was third after the opening leg.

Miller made another woeful showing in the slalom, straddling a gate at the top of the hill. It was the eighth slalom he had failed to finish this season, including one in this month's world championships. He was 14th after the opening leg.

"I had a bad weekend," said Miller, who also slid off the course in the giant slalom Saturday. "I didn't score a point, but my confidence is not dented. I still have the speed races."

Miller has 1,253 points and held a 191-point lead on Raich entering this weekend. But Raich collected 160 to move well within reach of the American's lead.

Miller must rediscover his form from early in the season in the upcoming speed races if he is to become the first American to win the overall title in 22 years. Phil Mahre, the only American to have won it, claimed the overall title in three consecutive years from 1981.

Kostelic wins combined on Olympic course

SAN SICARIO, Italy — Croatia's Janica Kostelic captured the only women's World Cup combined of the season Sunday, mastering the new course for next year's Olympics and ending Anja Paerson's two-race winning streak.

Kostelic posted the fastest time in the morning downhill leg and then cruised to victory in the single slalom run for a combined time of 2 minutes, 19.35 seconds.

Paerson, the Swede who won Friday's super giant slalom and secured her first downhill victory Saturday, finished 0.43 seconds behind. The big surprise came from Canada's Emily Brydon, previously known mostly as a speed specialist, who was third, 1.32 back.

The top Americans were Lindsey Kilod (fifth), Julia Mancuso (sixth) and Resi Stiegler (eighth).

Kostelic is the reigning Olympic champion in the discipline and also won the event in the last two world championships.

Federer tops Agassi to reach Dubai final

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Roger Federer routed Andre Agassi 6-3, 6-1 in the Dubai Open semifinals on Saturday and will play Croatia's Ivan Ljubicic in a title match for the third time this year.

The top-ranked Federer beat Agassi for the sixth straight time. This latest victory was even more impressive than the one in straight sets in last month's Australian Open quarterfinals. Agassi last defeated Federer in 2002.

"I have shown I can raise my game when it is important," Federer said. "I didn't expect anything like this because the way I was playing, I was really struggling with my rhythm and I thought it would be really hard against Agassi. But I pulled off a magnificent match."

Agassi said he made a few mistakes but conceded Federer was better.

"He was just too good in the second set," Agassi said. "I could have made a few less errors. But it was much more him out there tonight."

Report: Texas Tech admits it violated dietary supplement rules

FORT WORTH, Texas — Texas Tech acknowledged in a report to the NCAA that it violated regulations by purchasing dietary supplement products that aren't allowed to be given to athletes. The Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported Sunday.

The report, which the newspaper obtained from the university under the Texas Public Information Act, acknowledges that 15 supplements that are not allowed were bought over a 30-month period. The report, signed by athletic director Gerald Myers and faculty athletics representative Robert Baker and sent to the NCAA on Feb. 18, says the supplements were bought by the school's former director of sports nutrition, Aaron Shelby.

Shelby was fired by Tech last February after pleading guilty to money laundering.

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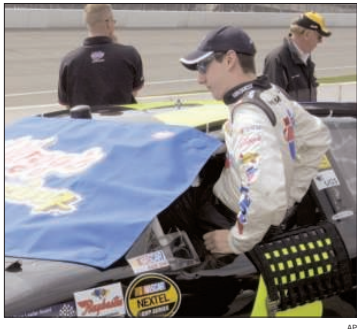
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Kyle Busch climbs into his car before qualifying for the Auto Club 500. Busch is the youngest driver to win the pole for a Nextel Cup race.

Martin adds 47th win to Busch Series haul

The Associated Press

FONTANA, Calif. — Mark Martin added to his record Busch Series victory total on Saturday, pulling away from Kevin Harvick at California Speedway for No. 47. Martin, a longtime star in NASCAR's top stock car series, was dominant. He led 102 of the 150 laps, including the last 34. He easily held off Harvick in an eight-lap sprint on the 2-mile oval after the last of eight caution flags, driving a Roush Racing Ford across the finish line about 10 car lengths ahead of Harvick's Chevrolet.

"I knew that Harvick was really fast on the restart," Martin said. "I knew I had my hands full, but that Kevin was going to do everything he could to win that race. But we just had an awesome car today."

Busch regular Shane Hmiel finished third, followed by Clint Bowyer, 19-year-old Reed Sorenson, in only his second Busch race, and Carl Edwards.

Martin came back last season from a self-imposed three-year Busch Series retirement and ran five races, picking up his 46th victory in the stepdown series. It was his first Busch victory since 2000 at Darlington, S.C.

Saturday's event began in daylight but a series of yellow flags and a 26-minute stoppage for a rain shower forced it to end under the lights. That made for constantly changing conditions on the track.

"I was real concerned about finishing the race at night, but this car didn't seem to mind. It was great," Martin said.

Harvick, another Cup regular, settled for his second straight runner-up finish in a Busch race.

"He got away from me toward the end, and there was nothing I could do," Harvick said. "Too little, too late, but I'm glad to see Mark win on his farewell tour."

Martin, who will retire from the Nextel Cup series at the end of the season, is the latest "Buschwhacker" — Cup regulars who drive limited schedules in Busch — to beat the Busch regulars.



Cup star Tony Stewart won the opener a week ago in Daytona, beating Harvick for his first Busch victory. Stewart started from the pole Saturday in the same car, owned by Harvick's wife, Delana, and was in contention until a flat tire slowed him in the last few laps. He wound up 29th, the last car on the lead lap. Busch champion Martin Truex finished 30th, blowing a tire and spinning late in the race.

Busch and Vickers make up youngest front row ever
FONTANA, Calif. — NASCAR began a new era of qualifying Saturday with new rules and the youngest pole winner in the history of stock-car racing's top series.

Rookie Kyle Busch, 19, claimed his first career pole in only his eighth Nextel Cup Series start, just beating out 21-year-old Hendrick Motorsports teammate Brian Vickers, who grabbed the outside spot on the front row for Sunday's Auto Club 500 at California Speedway. Busch won the pole with a lap of 188.245 mph, breaking the track record of 187.432 set in April 2002 by Ryan Newman.

Vickers, who works out of the same race shop, was also faster than the old mark at 187.740.

Referring to team owner Rick Hendrick, the younger Busch said, "It's definitely a great opportunity Mr. H. has given us. I'm glad we could do this for him." "It's definitely an awesome opportunity for the both of us to sit on the front row like that," added Busch, younger brother of reigning Cup champion Kurt Busch. "It's just a great opportunity for us to help both our teams excel. We've got a pole now ... all we need is a win."

Donald Thomas was 20 when he won a pole in NASCAR's top series in November 1952 at Lakewood Speedway in Atlanta. Vickers also won his first pole last year at age 20.

Bonds takes first swings

The Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Barry Bonds took a few swings in the batting cage at the San Francisco Giants' training complex Saturday, facing live pitching earlier than the club expected.

Bonds, who underwent arthroscopic knee surgery Jan. 31, took his first cuts of spring training against hitting coach Joe Lefebvre.

The seven-time National League MVP decided against the club's plan to hit off a tee, preferring to face real pitching.

"I knew he wasn't going to wait that long," Giants manager Felipe Alou said. "I knew the guy was going to be swinging the bat sooner than expected."

After Bonds underwent surgery, trainer Stan Conte said Bonds should be able to return for the final two weeks of spring training. The Giants haven't moved up that timetable yet, but Bonds usually is a quick healer.

The 40-year-old Bonds is third on the majors' career homers list with 703, trailing only Babe Ruth (714) and Hank Aaron (755). He won his seventh MVP award last season with 45 homers, 101 RBIs and a major league record 232 walks.

Red Sox: Curt Schilling made progress Saturday in his second bullpen session of spring training and still could start on Opening Day for the Boston Red Sox.

But manager Terry Francona doesn't think there's any reason to rush him.

"Opening day is not judgment day," Francona said after Schilling's 43-pitch, 13-minute session. "I think he made progress today. He's certainly not where he wants to be for Opening Day."

Schilling underwent surgery in November after the Red Sox beat the New York Yankees in the AL championship series and then the St. Louis Cardinals in the World Series.

He won Game 6 of the ALCS and Game 2 of the World Series after a tendon in his ankle, which had been slipping out of place, was sutured to his skin.

In his first bullpen session last Thursday, Schilling threw 47 pitches and said his ankle wasn't causing him pain.



San Francisco Giants slugger Barry Bonds waits for his turn to take batting practice on Saturday.

The Red Sox open the season on April 3 against the Yankees in New York.

Cardinals: Jason Isringhausen, who tied for the National League lead with 47 saves last year, agreed to a three-year contract extension with the St. Louis Cardinals.

Isringhausen tied Armando Benitez of the Florida Marlins for the save lead to help the Cardinals win their first pennant in 17 years. He tied the team single-season save record set by Lee Smith in 1991 despite playing much of the season with a painful hip condition that required surgery in November.

Isringhausen agreed to a new three-year deal that replaces the final year of his current deal. The contract will run through the 2007 season with an option for 2008 and including a \$1.25 million buyout will be worth a guaranteed \$25.75 million.

In three seasons with the team, he has 101 saves and his total of 168 saves over the past five seasons is fourth-best in the major leagues.

Isringhausen had been in the final year of a four-year contract he signed before the 2002 season. That contract had included an option for 2006.

Dodgers: Norihiro Nakamura is expected to report to the Los Angeles Dodgers next week after clearing up his visa problems.

Manager Jim Tracy said he

was told the Japanese infielder will arrive at the team's spring training facility in Vero Beach, Fla., late Tuesday.

"He'll get a very good look in spring training," Tracy said before Saturday's workout.

Nakamura, an eight-time All-Star in Japan, signed a minor league contract with the Dodgers earlier this month. He had a career .263 average with 307 homers in his 13-year career with the Kintetsu Buffaloes of the Japanese Pacific League. He spent time working out with the Dodgers during spring training last year.

He is expected to compete for playing time at third base with Jose Valentin and Antonio Perez.

Tracy also said closer Eric Gagne, who sustained a mild sprain of a ligament in his left knee Thursday, was continuing with all conditioning work as normal and hopefully be back on the field during Tuesday or Wednesday.

Blue Jays: Toronto got its first full-squad outdoor workout after being rained out Friday.

Manager John Gibbons was happy about the full workout because he knows showers are in the forecast for Sunday.

"I'll be the same group having to throw inside that day on Thursday," said Gibbons. "It's OK though, as long as they throw."

Right-hander Billy Koch made his first trip to the mound to face live hitters.

"I'm glad I didn't hit anybody," said Koch who returned to Toronto, where he was a first round pick in 1996. "Felt good to see a hitter in there. I was just getting a feel seeing the hitter in there. You can throw a bullpen session all day long but without a hitter in there it changes things a little bit."

Orioles: Sammy Sosa was victimized by an elaborate practical joke by manager Lee Mazzilli.

Mazzilli gathered the entire team at the end of a long practice and told the players they would be running the bases in rapid succession. He assigned Sosa to begin the drill, telling him to sprint to second base as if he hit a double.

Sosa did it, then turned around to see no one behind him.

Everyone laughed and walked off the field, leaving Sosa alone in the middle of the diamond.

"You have to be smart with a broad grin. As he walked toward the dugout, Sosa got a big hug from Mazzilli just past first base.

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Air Force's Jake Burtch tries to keep UNLV's Ricky Morgan from getting off a shot during Saturday night's game. UNLV won 63-57.

Falcons take a fall

UNLV rides second-half surge to victory over AFA; Army and Navy are beaten in Patriot League finales

The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Romel Beck had 20 points and 10 rebounds Saturday night and Michael Umeh added 15 points as UNLV beat Air Force 63-57, the Rebels' fifth straight victory.

UNLV (14-11, 6-6 Mountain West Conference) took control with an 18-2 run midway through the second half, including two three-point plays by Umeh. A three-point play by Beck with 5:10 to play capped the rally and gave UNLV a 53-46 lead.

The Rebels held off the Falcons thereafter, thanks in part to Odaty Blankson's three-point play as the 35-second shot clock was expiring and a 5-for-5 effort at the foul line by Ricky Morgan. Blankson had nine points and six rebounds for the Rebels.

Air Force (16-11, 7-4) made only three field goals in the final 12-13 in losing for the fourth time in five games. The Falcons, who at one time were challenging Utah for the Mountain West title, have fallen to third, a game behind second-place New Mexico and three back of regular-season champion Utah.

Antoine Hood led Air Force with 17 points and Nick Welch had 15 points, six assists and six rebounds.

Service academies

The Falcons led throughout the first half, using two three-pointers by Welch to open an 18-9 lead with 7:16 left before intermission. Air Force led 30-24 at halftime.

Holy Cross 66, Army 49: At Worcester, Mass., Keith Simmons scored 18 points as Holy Cross raced to a 22-point halftime lead and coasted from there in a Patriot League regular-season finale.

Holy Cross (22-5, 13-1 Patriot), which won its 14th consecutive game, will play Army again in the conference tournament quarterfinals on Friday.

Matt Bell scored 14 points to lead Army (3-23, 1-13).

After the Cadets' Cory Simning scored the opening basket, the Crusaders used a 12-0 run to take control.

Kevin Hamilton hit a three-pointer to start Holy Cross on a 19-9 run as the Crusaders took a 36-14 halftime lead.

Army pulled within 38-27 with an 11-0 run early in the second half. Bell hit two three-pointers in the run and Jimmy Sewell added one.

Holy Cross responded with a 12-2 run sparked by Torey Thomas and Simmons for a 50-29 lead with 9:34 left.

Army got no closer than 14 thereafter.

American 84, Navy 77: At Washington, D.C., Jason Thomas and Raimonda Petruskas scored 17 points each and American finished its fourth straight winning season in a Patriot League regular-season finale.

American (15-11, 8-6) and Navy (9-18, 5-9) will meet again Friday in a first-round game of the Patriot League tournament. American is seeded third and Navy sixth.

David Hooper led Navy with 20 points, Taj Matthews scored 15 and Corey Johnson added 11 for the Midshipmen.

Patrick Okpwa scored 12 points and Andrew Ingram added 11 for the Eagles, who overcame a 10-point deficit in the first half and led thereafter. American closed the first half with a 7-0 run, capped by Linas Lekavicius' layup that provided a 47-45 lead at intermission.

Thomas, Petruskas, Okpwa, Matej Cresnik and Ryan Grahm, who finished with seven assists, are American's first senior group in 30 years to compile four consecutive winning seasons.

Washington tops Arizona to keep title hopes alive

The Associated Press

SEATTLE — Tre Simmons scored 24 points, and No. 14 Washington moved one step closer to its first Pac-10 title in 20 years with a 83-85 victory over ninth-ranked Arizona.

Nate Robinson added 22 points for the Huskies (23-4, 13-3 Pac-10), who won their 22nd straight game at home.

Washington can now clinch at least a share of its first Pac-10 regular season title since 1985 with a sweep of California and Stanford next weekend.

Arizona would share the championship with a victory Saturday at Arizona State.

Channing Frye scored 30 points on 13-for-15 shooting for the Wildcats (24-5, 14-3). Arizona's leading scorer, Salim Stoudamire, averaging 18.2 points per game, struggled to get into the offense for the second straight game. Stoudamire had 15 points, but missed two of three

Men's Top 25 Roundup

tree throws with 1/2 seconds left that could have pulled Washington State on Thursday.

The loss also kept Arizona coach Lute Olson from passing UCLA's John Wooden for most Pac-10 victories. Each has 304.

No. 3 Boston College 70, Seton Hall 58: At Boston, Jared Dudley had 19 points and seven rebounds to help Boston College close in on the Big East regular-season title.

Boston College (23-2, 12-2) can clinch a share of the Big East regular-season title and the No. 1 seed in the conference tournament with a victory over Pittsburgh at home on Monday. It would be the sixth and final league title for the Eagles, who

are leaving for the Atlantic Coast Conference next season.

No. 7 Duke 58, St. John's 47: At New York, Lee Melchioni had 14 of his 16 points in the first half to lead Duke (21-4), which won its third straight game after losing two in a row. Duke's Sheldon Williams and Daniel Ewing scored a total of four points on 0-for-12 shooting in the first half.

Lamont Hamilton had 15 points for St. John's (9-16), which has lost six of seven.

No. 11 Louisville 53, Memphis 44: At Memphis, Tenn., Taquan Dean scored 14 points and Francisco Garcia added 12 on a rough shooting night for both teams.

The Cardinals (24-4, 12-2 Conference USA) used a 12-0 run midway through the second half to take the lead. Although the Tigers did come to tie it once, they couldn't regain the lead as the Cardinals' Juan Palacios scored

six straight points and blocked a shot during the stretch.

No. 13 Utah 69, BYU 60: At Salt Lake City, Andrew Bogut had 26 points and 13 rebounds and Marc Jackson finished with 11 assists, helping Utah to a season sweep of its archrival.

No. 17 Connecticut 73, No. 18 Pittsburgh 64: At Pittsburgh, Marcus Williams scored 13 points and put Connecticut ahead to stay with a layup off the glass with 3½ minutes left to keep the Huskies in contention for the Big East regular-season title.

Despite Chevon Troutman's 22 points and 12 rebounds in his final regular-season home game, Pitt (18-7, 8-6) lost its third consecutive game.

No. 19 Pacific 75, Cal State Northridge 61: At Stockton, Calif., Christian Maraker and Tyler Newton each scored 15 points and Pacific won its 19th straight game.

Johnny Gray shot 4-for-7 from

long range on the way to 14 points and David Doubly added 10 points and four assists.

No. 21 Charlotte 81, Southern Miss 58: At Charlotte, N.C., Curtis Withers scored 25 points and grabbed 11 rebounds as Charlotte closed the home schedule with its seventh straight victory.

No. 22 Oklahoma 103, Baylor 60: At Norman, Okla., Tajay Williams had 15 points and 10 assists and Oklahoma shot 66 percent.

No. 24 Cincinnati 89, TCU 74: At Fort Worth, Texas, Jihad Muhammad had 21 points and Cincinnati overcame 22 turnovers by shooting a season-best 61 percent from the field.

No. 25 Nevada 76, Fresno State 63: At Fresno, Calif., Nick Fazekas scored 28 points and Mo Charlo keyed a big second-half run to help Nevada win its eighth straight and clinch at least a share of the Western Athletic Conference title.

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Seeding 100

Only 3 coaches have reached mark in fewer games than Boeheim

BY JOHN KEKIS
The Associated Press

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — As he saluted the massive Carrier Dome crowd, Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim held aloft a jersey that pretty much summed up the emotion of the moment — “Boeheim 700” was emblazoned on the back, signifying yet another milestone in his impressive career.

With senior forward Hakim Warrick scoring a career-high 36 points in his final home game, the 15th-ranked Orange defeated Providence 91-66 on Saturday to give Boeheim his 700th victory. And with only one regular-season game remaining — on the road against surging Connecticut — it was a welcome victory.

“Just to get 700 out of the way, not to have to keep that going for another week, was a huge relief for me,” said Boeheim, the sixth active coach to reach 700. “This week has been tough for everybody just to get through.”

Boeheim, in his 29th year at Syracuse, reached victory No. 700 in 939 games — faster than all but Kentucky’s Adolph Rupp (876), UNLV’s Jerry Tarkanian (836) and Kansas’ Phog Allen (938).

No wonder hundreds in the crowd of 32,804 held up placards with “700” printed across the front and thousands of fans had signed a huge banner that was presented to Boeheim at center court after the game.

“I could have done without that,” said Boeheim, who turned 60 in November. “It’s nice. I’m happy. But I’ve never been about that type of thing. You have to do that because that’s what people expect. I want the players to get all the credit. That’s the way it should be. They’re kids. They need it. I don’t need it, never did need it.”

“That doesn’t mean I’m not proud. It’s a private feeling,” he

said. “I’ve seen too many people where their focus changes and they don’t do the same things that they always did.”

Not lost in the aftermath were the performances of the three seniors, who have contributed to 100 of Boeheim’s victories. Besides Warrick’s slam-dunking heroics (he had seven), swingman Josh Pace finished with 11 points, five assists and two steals, and center Craig Firth had six points, two blocks and a steal to help key a 14-3 run in the second half that broke open the game.

“It was good that he was able to get it here at the Dome, the last game here at home,” Pace said. “We wanted to get it out of the way before the Big East (tournament) started, so it was good that we were able to do that.”

“This is a movie script right here, being able to go out and get a big win like that,” Warrick said. “Walking off and all the seniors getting applauded off the court, it just couldn’t be any better.”

It was the second straight win for Syracuse (24-5, 11-4 Big East) and the worst loss of the season for Providence (12-16, 2-12).

Gerry McNamara had 14 points and 10 assists and Terrence Roberts had 14 points and 10 rebounds for Syracuse. The Orange shot 68 percent (17-for-25) in the second half to pull away. It was aittersweet moment for Providence coach Tim Welsh, a former assistant under Boeheim.

“I’m always hard playing against him because he’s such a good defender,” said Welsh, who gave Boeheim a warm embrace after the game. “Today was a little different because of the number up on the board. I was happy he got it, but not against him.”

“When it did happen, I just congratulated him. He’s so deserving,” Welsh said. “I’m so glad the fans gave him what they gave him today. Hopefully, they’ll vote him



Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim hugs senior Josh Pace as he leaves Saturday’s game against Providence. Boeheim won his 700th career game and Pace played his last home game as the Orange beat Providence 91-66.

into the Hall of Fame and all of this will ride into a nice run to St. Louis,” site of the NCAA tournament’s Final Four.

The big turnout, the eighth-largest since Carrier Dome history, ensured that Syracuse would lead the nation in average attendance for the first time in a decade. The Orange, who led the nation every year from 1985 through 1995, entered the day averaging 22,400 and finished at 22,978. Kentucky, which has just one game remaining at 23,000-seat Rupp Arena, is averaging 22,399.

“The fans have been unbelievable all year,” said Boeheim, a finalist for the Hall of Fame for the first time. “It’s just tremendous to get out there.”

Cats top Alabama for 43rd SEC title

BY JOHN ZENOR
The Associated Press

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Patrick Sparks wanted the ball and Tubby Smith wasn’t going to deny him.

Sparks hit five of his seven three-pointers in the second half and scored a season-high 26 points, lifting No. 5 Kentucky to a 78-71 comeback victory over 16th-ranked Alabama on Saturday to clinch the Wildcats’ 43rd Southeastern Conference title.

Smith had no problem pinpointing the moment he knew Sparks was feeling it.

“When he hollered over to me, ‘Call my number, coach,’” he said. “When he made the first one, we kept going to him.”

Good strategy. Led by Sparks, Kentucky (22-3, 13-1 SEC) turned a 14-point, first-half deficit into an eight-point cushion after intermission. The Wildcats held off a late challenge by going 8-for-10 from the free throw line down the stretch, handing the Crimson Tide (21-6, 10-4) their first home loss of the season.

Beating a team Smith called “talented enough to win it all” on the road isn’t a bad way to clinch an SEC title for the Wildcats.

Kentucky made a season-high 13 three-pointers on only 19 attempts.

“We caught fire,” the Wildcats’ Chuck Hayes said. “Anywhere in the gym tonight, he (Sparks) was going to hit it.”

Sparks got shots off behind teammates’ screens, on some nifty jukes and sometimes just stepping a few feet behind the three-point line and letting fly. He had 20 points after halftime, going 5-for-6 on three-pointers.

“I thought my rhythm kind of early tonight,” Sparks said. “Shooting is a lot about rhythm. You get in that rhythm, and you’re going to have a good night.”

After Alabama came within three points on Ronald Steele’s jumper with just under a minute



Kentucky coach Tubby Smith yells instructions during the Wildcats’ 78-71 victory over Alabama.

left, Sparks collected a rebound and hit three free throws in the final 34 seconds to wrap up the conference crown.

“Everything he threw up seemed to go in,” said Kennedy Winston, who scored 21 points and often had the task of trying to guard Sparks.

Kelenna Azubuike added 15 points for Kentucky, which has won 12 of 13 games. Ravi Moss had 10 points.

Kentucky, trailed by as many as 14 points before halftime, took a 50-47 lead on a three-point play by Azubuike with 11:42 left to cap a 13-0 run for its first lead since the opening minutes.

After that, the game was played at a faster tempo that favored the deeper Wildcats, with Kentucky eventually building a 70-62 lead.

“That was our No. 1 goal, to try to wear them down with our bench,” Smith said. “They were getting the same shots but their legs were a little tired. And that’s what our bench can do.”

Purdue’s Keady loses finale

The Associated Press

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Minnesota’s Vincent Grier scored 12 of his 15 points in the second half and Aaron Robinson added 14 points to rally Minnesota from a 15-point deficit for a 59-57 victory Saturday, ruining Gene Keady’s home finale at Purdue.

The Gophers (19-9, 9-6) survived despite J’son Stamper missing two free throws with 5.9 seconds left. Minnesota has won three straight.

Purdue’s Gary Ware rebounded Stamper’s second miss, and Brandon McKnight drove in for a 12-footer that would have forced overtime. The 78-68 loss off the back of the rim.

The Boilermakers (3-11, 3-11) lost their third in a row after playing the last 33 minutes without Carl Landry, the Big Ten’s lead-

ing scorer. Landry injured his right knee early and finally limped back to the bench with 7:26 remaining.

Purdue looked like it would give Keady a special send-off with a strong first-half defensive performance. The Boilermakers took control with first-half runs of 6-0 and 10-0 and led 31-18 after Teague hit a three-pointer in the final minute of the half.

Keady finished his career at Mackey Arena with a 282-72 record, including 20-4 against Minnesota.

Before the game, the student section, named the “Gene Pool,” presented him with a commemorative photo and Purdue officials gave Keady more gifts after the game.

Keady retires with a record of 531-303 in 27 seasons, including the last 25 at Purdue.



Gene Keady raved along the sideline for the last time on Saturday.

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Wade steps up for Heat against Magic

BY TIM REYNOLDS
The Associated Press

MIAMI — Ordinarily, Shaquille O'Neal would be around the basket and helping Miami guard precocious leads in the closing seconds of tight games.

He wasn't there Saturday, still nursing a sprained knee — but Dwyane Wade filled his role nicely.

Wade scored 14 of his 25 points in the final quarter, plus swatted away a layup try by Steve Francis with 10.2 seconds left to help secure the Heat's 101-98 win over the Orlando Magic.

"I don't get animated too much. When I do, there's a cause behind it," said Wade, who displayed plenty of emotion down the stretch. "I was excited at that moment, trying to get my team going and let everybody know that we were going to win the game."

Wade scored eight straight Miami points in the final minutes, the first four coming on a pair of tiebreaking jumpers, the last two from the foul line, including a pair to give the Heat a 99-95 lead with 15.8 seconds left. And he capped the win with

two big defensive plays, including the block that erased Francis' layup attempt that could have drawn the Magic within two. Francis drove down the lane and had a step on Eddie Jones, got the shot off, but Wade soared and sent the ball bouncing into the first row of sideline seats.

"I was surprised Dwyane was able to come over and block that shot," said Francis, who pointed out that he had two blocks in the game when asked about Wade's play. "Once I got by Eddie, there was another guy and I threw the shot. It was a good defensive play."

With Orlando down by three with 0.4 seconds left, Wade tipped the Magic's inbound pass and kept them from trying a desperation shot at overtime.

"He certainly asserted himself down the stretch," Orlando coach Johnny Davis said.

Eddie Jones had 15 points, Damon Jones added 14, Rasual Butler 12 and Michael Doleac 10 for Miami.

Orlando's Grant Hill led all scorers with 28 points, on 12-of-17 shooting. Francis, who had 31 points in the first half, outmatched with Miami, missed his first six shots from the field and finished with 16.

Short: Webber welcomed by Philly fans in debut

SHORT, FROM BACK PAGE

"When I hit my first shot and they reacted that way, it was like: OK, this is going to be home. It felt great," Webber said. "I'm just disappointed I couldn't bring a win home."

Philadelphia began the night just one game behind Boston for first place in the Atlantic Division, and there was a sense in the city that making the playoffs might merely be the first step of what could be a deep march through the postseason if Webber and Iverson can blend.

"I'm looking to the challenge to see how we connect," Webber said. "I think it's definitely Allen's team because he's proven to the city, the community and the team what he brings to the table. But I think now it's going to be our team because of the way him and I are going to work together."

Iverson is no stranger to being paired with scorers who were supposed to work well with him, but none of the players the 76ers have imported — from Jerry Stackhouse to Larry Hughes to Keith Van Horn to Glenn Robinson to Toni Kukoc — has ever fit into that role.

Part of the blame can be pointed at Iverson for his tendency to dominate the ball to such an extent that those second scorers never had enough offensive opportunities to be anything but threats. This time will be different, the Sixers hope, because of Webber's ability to pass the ball

and run the offense through the half-court post.

Webber said the contrast between Sacramento's schemes and Philadelphia's offense was "like the difference between cursive and shorthand. It's just crazy, but I will make an adjustment."

For the Kings, concerns over Webber's recovery from microfracture surgery on his knee — who had no way I'm 100 percent," he said Saturday — along with the \$62 million remaining on his contract were two of the other reasons behind their decision to trade one of the game's most versatile big men.

The game was close throughout, the Kings coming back from an 11-point third-quarter deficit and going ahead 96-92 on a basket by Williamson before Webber hit a jumper to make it a two-point game.

Samuel Dalembert missed two free throws, and Igoudala air-balled a three-pointer after Aaron McKie grabbed an offensive rebound. Another chance to tie came when Igoudala was fouled on a three-point attempt with 7.7 seconds left, but he missed the first before making the next two.

Two free throws by Cuttino Mobley made it 101-98, and Iverson hit the first of two with 3.4 seconds left before intentionally missing the second. The members of the Kings helped Webber off the floor after he missed.

"I told Chris that the rebound was going to come long," Iverson said. "We just happened right." Iverson said. "We just couldn't finish it."

Toms, DiMarco make it an All-American Match

BY DOUG FERGUSON
The Associated Press

CARLSBAD, Calif. — David Toms is headed for the finals of the Match Play Championship for the second time in three years, thanks to a sensational stretch of golf never seen before in this tournament.

He twice hit a 5-wood closer to the hole than some players can lay a putt.

He hit a 9-iron into the cup for an eagle.

Over his final eight holes, he left no approach shot outside 12 feet. The only time he was in trouble and had to hack it sideways out of the rough, Toms hit a wedge into 6 inches to save par.

"I was doing OK until he went mad," said Ian Poulter, a helpless victim at La Costa Resort. "He just had a spell in the middle which was difficult to play against. There was really not a lot I could do."

Toms improved to 17-5 in this event with a 3-and-2 victory over Poulter. Along the way, he made everyone forget about the big names long departed from the Match Play Championship.

Toms delivered a command performance — nothing more sensational than his birdie-eagle stretch that deflated Poulter — and set up an All-American final for the fourth straight year at La Costa.

Chris DiMarco, who played against Toms in college, recovered from a disastrous start against U.S. Open champion Retief Goosen.

He was 3-down after three holes, then birdied four of the first five holes on the back nine and closed him out 2 and 1 when Goosen three-putted on the 17th. "Obviously, there's only two of us left," DiMarco said. "And one of us has to win tomorrow."

After 62 matches crammed into three days involving 64 players



David Toms blasts from the bunker on the seventh hole during his semifinal victory in the World Match Play Championship on Saturday.

from 18 countries, the 36-hole final Sunday comes down to two guys who competed against each other in college — Toms at LSU, DiMarco at Florida.

Toms and DiMarco will play a 36-hole final Sunday with \$1.3 million on the line.

Two-time defending champion Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson and Vijay Singh were long gone from the par-5 11th, Toms hit another shortage of sensational golf, particularly from Toms.

From 192 yards in the middle of the soggy ninth fairway, Toms hit his 5-wood into 4 feet for birdie and his first lead of the match.

Then he took a little off a 9-iron from 123 yards in the 10th fairway that spun back into the cup for birdie. And from 235 yards on the par-5 11th, Toms hit another 5-wood that stopped 2 feet away.

That 5-wood is a charm. It's the same club Toms used to make an

ace in the third round of the 2001 PGA Championship, which he won by one shot over Mickelson.

"I can't seem to find one I can hit any better," Toms said.

DiMarco's victory seemed unlikely after he lost the first three holes to Goosen, and stood over a 6-foot par putt on the fifth hole to keep the deficit from growing any larger.

"He got off to a great start," DiMarco said. "I was just trying not to lose 8 and 7."

DiMarco lost a ball in a tree, and DiMarco found his groove on the back nine with four birdies in five holes to pull away. Just when it looked as though he might give back the lead, DiMarco made a 10-foot par putt on the 17th hole, and Goosen three-putted for bogey, missing a 3-footer to end the match.

"I couldn't hit it near enough to the flag to make the putts," Goosen said.

Rosales holds off Wie in SBS Open

The Associated Press

KAHUKU, Hawaii — Michelle Wie made a strong run at her first LPGA Tour victory, finishing two strokes behind Jennifer Rosales, who went wire to wire for a victory.

Rosales, 27, won her season-opening SBS Open.

Wie started the day five strokes behind Rosales, then shot her third straight 70 to the Cristie Kerr (72) for second at 210. Playing on her home island of Oahu, the 15-year-old Wie was trying to become the youngest golfer to win an LPGA event. She had to settle for her best finish in 18 starts.

Rosales shot a 1-over-par 73 and picked up her second tour vic-

tory by finishing at 8-under 208 on the windswept Palmer Course.

Webb rallies for ANZ title

GOLD COAST, Australia — Karrie Webb overcame a four-stroke deficit in three holes on the way to a 5-under-par 67 on Sunday and won the ANZ Ladies Masters for the fifth time.

Webb beat Ai Miyazato by one stroke after starting the day at Royal Pines four behind the 19-year-old from Japan, who led the joint Australian and European Ladies Tour event after each of the first three rounds.

Webb birdied the second hole, chipped in for eagle on the par-5 third from about 60 feet and then birdied the fourth to pull into a tie for the lead.

"It's a great start to the year

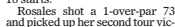
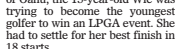
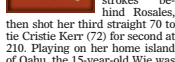
and will give me some confidence, hopefully to take back to the States with me," Webb said.

The Australian finished at 16-under 272. Miyazato closed with an even-par 72.

Outback cut to 36 holes

LUTZ, Fla. — Morris Hatakeyama finished an opening-round 68 and followed with a 67 Saturday afternoon for a 7-under-par 135 and a two-stroke lead in the rain-shortened Outback Steakhouse PGA match.

Hatakeyama was one of just 22 players to complete the second round of the event, which was cut to 36 holes. The remainder of the tournament is scheduled to be played Sunday, although heavy rain is forecast and the conclusion could be pushed back to Monday.





RAYMOND T. CONWAY/Stars and Stripes

Hanau players celebrate their victory over Aviano in the boys Division II championship game in Mannheim, Germany, on Saturday.

Fontanez, Hanau size up Aviano for Div.-II crown

BY RUSTY BRYAN

Stars and Stripes

MANNHEIM, Germany - Just as Hanau coach Tim Smith hoped, Marcus Fontanez played it up big Saturday night, helping the Panthers claim their second straight European Division II basketball championship with a 50-37 defeat of outsize Aviano.

Fontanez scored 17 points and dominated inside as expected against the Saints' smaller defenders.

Aviano's Dustin Miller, who scored a tournament-record 50 points last year, made three of four three-point shots in the first

quarter Saturday, staking Aviano to a 13-4 lead.

"He was doing good," Fontanez said of Miller's exhibition. "I thought to myself that if he kept hitting them like that, we were going to have trouble."

Miller, however, was hitting his threes over Hanau's packed-in starting front line of 6-5 sophomores Xavier James and T.J. Shulson on either side of the 6-4 Fontanez.

Smith put the sophomores into the lineup to take the boards away from Aviano, whose tallest players barely reach 6 feet. The way Aviano was shooting in the early going though, there weren't any rebounds to get.

Smith's answer was to replace the sophomores with Cameron Warner and Ivan James and allow them and his starting backcourt of Jeremy Marshall and journeyman MVP Malcolm Lane to push Miller all over the floor.

"We started pressuring him and he started missing," Fontanez said of Miller, who hit only one of seven from the floor the rest of the way. "We do real well off the bench."

Particularly with the scrappy James, who pulled down seven rebounds, made four steals and seemed to have a hand in everyone's face.

Also contributing to Hanau's game-sealing 31-8 run over the next two periods was the Panthers' ability to pound the ball inside to Fontanez.

"We didn't go inside at first," Smith said. "Instead, we tried to shoot outside with them. We wanted to get the ball inside."

The tactic wore out Aviano's Mikal Fair, who was assigned to front Fontanez. Fair, a head shorter than Fontanez, held his own in the early going and limited Fontanez to four first-quarter points. But as Marshall, Warner and Lane, who scored 11 points, made crisp entry passes and Fontanez started muscling to the ball and to the hoop, Fair got bounced around.

"When they let the game get physical," Aviano coach Ken McNeely said, "the game's over for us."

Fontanez, fully recovered from an ankle injury he suffered earlier in the tournament, dropped in two put-backs, a field goal and a free throw in the second quarter as Hanau cut its deficit to 16-15 at halftime. With 5:55 to play in the third quarter, Marshall, who scored 10 points, banged home a three-pointer that gave Hanau the lead for good.

"We let up in the second quarter," McNeely mused as Hanau pulled away. "We should have gone right at them."

E-mail Rusty Bryan at: bryanr@mail.es-tripes.osd.mil

Local scoreboard

European basketball championships

MANNHEIM, Germany - Saturday's final results from the European high school basketball tournaments:

Boys Division II championship

Hanau 50, Aviano 37 (Saturday at Mannheim)	
Aviano	11 23 5 16-37
Hanau	4 11 20 15-50
Scoring-Avi:	Dustin Miller 12, Tony Williams 11, Carl Cephas 4, Jacques Watson 4, Jordan Legen 4, Mike Legen 4
Scoring-Han:	Marcus Fontanez 17, Malcolm Lane 11, Jeremy Marshall 10, Cameron Warner 8, Ivan James 4

All-tournament team: Malcolm Lane (MVP), Marcus Fontanez and Jeremy Marshall, Hanau; Dustin Williams and Tony Williams, Aviano; Earl Lee, Mannheim; Mark Peayner, Naples; Ken Griffin, Patch.

Girls Division II

All-tournament team: Katisha Fankler (MVP) and Kyrie Buehler, Mannheim; Berna Damoun and Mikal Wilmer, Naples; Berna Damoun and Mikal Wilmer, Mannheim; Kassy'e Lalau, Patch.

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SPORTS

Champions again



RAYMOND T. CONWAY/Stars and Stripes

Hanau's Malcom Lane, right, drives to the hoop over Aviano's Carl Cephas during the boys Division II championship game in Mannheim, Germany, on Saturday. Lane scored 11 points and was named tournament MVP as Hanau defeated Aviano 50-37 to win the title. See story on Page 35.

Toms back in Match Play final to face compatriot DiMarco

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Marion tips game in Suns' favor, leaving Mavericks disputing call

Page 33



WR Muhammad gets six-year deal with Bears,
Page 29

Webber falls short in debut

Former King misses layup as 76ers lose

By CHRIS SHERIDAN
The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The strange confluence of Chris Webber's past and present came down to the play that "never works."

It would have worked this time if Webber had converted a layup.

Webber came up short on a last-second layup after grabbing an offensive rebound off an intentionally missed free throw, spoiling his debut for the Philadelphia 76ers on Saturday night in a 101-99 loss to the Sacramento Kings.

"For some reason, that play never works," Webber said of the intentional miss. "I just knew it was going to work this time. I tried to get it out of my left hand and throw it up, thinking time, but there was more time than I thought, and after I missed, it was a letdown."

Webber had 16 points, 11 rebounds and three steals in his first game with his new team. Strangely, it came against the franchise that traded him less than 72 hours earlier.

Webber didn't have the ball in his hands as much as he's accustomed to, but Allen Iverson took care of distributing it by handing out a season-high 14 assists to go with his 27 points.

Mike Bibby scored 19 points to lead six players in double figures for the Kings.

Webber was shocked when he first learned he had been traded, an emotion that didn't quite compare to the overwhelming weirdness as he debuted for his new team against his old one.

"Real weird seeing No. 4 starting for the other team, but a lot of fun," Sacramento's Brad Miller said.



AP

Former Sacramento Kings forward Chris Webber (4) and new Philadelphia 76ers' teammate Allen Iverson (3) talk during a stoppage on Saturday.

Webber, wearing a red and black headband and a white "Sixers" jersey, exchanged hugs with all five starters from his former team after receiving a thunderous ovation during introductions from the 76ers' first sellout crowd of the season.

Scalper traffic was heavy outside the arena, and the arena was full for the first time in 26 home games. More than 11,500 advance tickets have been sold since the 76ers pulled off the trade for Webber on Wednesday night.

The relatively low price the Sixers paid, giving up forwards Corliss Williamson, Kenny Thomas and Brian Skinner while keeping intact their young core of Samuel Dalembert, Kyle Korver, Andre Iguodala and Willie Green, helped contribute to a palpable air of excitement.

Webber knocked down his first two shots, both jumpers, and played to the crowd after Sacramento was forced to call an early timeout.

SEE SHORT ON PAGE 34

Mark Martin adds to record Busch victories

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